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PARTISAN REVIEW

PR

WINTER, 1946

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PARTISAN REVIEW

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Contributors

Stephen Spender, the well-known poet and critic, has recently returned to England from a trip to Germany.

Jean-Paul Sartre, one of the foremost writers of the new generation in France and a leader of the existentialist movement has just launched a new literary review in Paris.

George Anthony, who lives in Boston, is publishing his first book of poems this year.

Hanna Arendt is a frequent contributor to Partisan Review. She was a student of Karl Jaspers in pre-Hitler Germany and is the author of *Der Liebesbegriff bei Augustin.*

Randall Jarrell's latest book of poems is *Little Friend, Little Friend.*

Robert Lowell, author of *Land of Unlikeness,* is now living in Maine.

Wylie Sypher, of the English department at Simmons College, has contributed critical articles and reviews to Partisan Review and other literary periodicals.

Barbara Deming, a graduate of Bennington College, has worked for the film division of the Library of Congress.

Frederick J. Kiesler will write and edit the Art and Architecture section of Partisan Review. Architect and author of *Contemporary Art* (Brentano's, 1930), he was director of the Laboratory for Design-Correlation at Columbia University till 1942. He has recently designed the museum-galleries of Peggy Guggenheim's Art of this Century, New York City.

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Elizabeth Hardwick's first novel, *The Ghostly Lover,* was published in 1945 by Harcourt, Brace.

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Katherine Hoskins' first volume of verse was published last year by the Cummington Press. She lives in Weston, Mass.

Niccolo Tucci, whose work has appeared in *Politics* and *Harper's Bazaar,* is now at work on a novel.

David J. Dallin is the author of several important studies of Soviet policy published by The Yale Press.

Charles Olson, whose critical essays have appeared in *Twice-a-Year* and other magazines, lives in Washington, D. C.

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German Impressions and Conversations

STEPHEN SPENDER

COLOGNE

AT HAGEN I had seen a good deal of damage, and again at Hamm, where most of the centre of the town was destroyed. Also all along the route from Oenhausen there were bridges destroyed, detours, temporary wooden bridges touchingly named after some member of the Royal Engineers—McMahon's Bridge, Piper's Bridge, Smith's Bridge, etc.; but it was in Cologne that I realized what total destruction meant.

My first impression on passing through was of there not being a single house left. There are plenty of walls, but these are a thin mask in front of the damp, hollow, stinking emptiness of gutted interiors. Whole streets with nothing but the walls left standing are worse than streets flattened. They are more sinister and oppressive.

Actually, there are a few habitable buildings left in Cologne: three hundred in all, I am told. One passes through street after street of houses whose windows look hollow and blackened—like the opened mouth of a charred corpse; behind these windows there is nothing except floors, furniture, bits of rag, books, all dropped to the bottom of the building to form there a sodden mass.

Through the streets of Cologne thousands of people trudge all day long. These are crowds who a few years ago were shop-gazing in their city, or waiting to go to the cinema or to the opera, or stopping taxis. They are the same people who once were the ordinary inhabitants of a great city when by what now seems an unbelievable magical feat of reconstruction in time, this putrescent corpse-city was the hub of the Rhineland, with a great shopping centre, acres of plate glass, restaurants, a massive business street containing the head offices of many banks and firms, an excellent opera, theatres, cinema, lights in the streets at night.

Now it requires a real effort of the imagination to think back to that Cologne which I knew well ten years ago. Everything has gone.

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In this the destruction in Germany is quite different from even the worst that has happened in England (though not different from Poland and from parts of Russia). In England there are holes, gaps and wounds, but the surrounding life of the people themselves has filled them up, creating a scar which will heal. In towns such as Cologne and those of the Ruhr, something quite different has happened. The external destruction is so great that it cannot be healed and the surrounding life of the rest of the country cannot flow into and resuscitate the city, which is not only battered but also dismembered and cut off from the rest of Germany and from Europe. The ruin of the city is reflected in the internal ruin of its inhabitants; instead of being able to form a scar over the city's wounds, they are parasites sucking at a dead carcase, digging among the ruins for hidden food, doing business at their Black Market near the cathedral, which is the commerce of destruction instead of production.

The people who live there seem quite dissociated from Cologne. They resemble rather a tribe of wanderers who have discovered a ruined city in a desert and who are camping there, living in the cellars and hunting amongst the ruins for the booty, relics of a dead civilization.

The great city looks like a corpse and stinks like one also, with all the garbage which has not been cleared away, all the bodies still buried under heaps of stones and iron. Although the streets have been partly cleared, they still have many holes in them, and some of the side streets are impassable. The general impression is that very little has been cleared away. There are landscapes of untouched ruin still left.

The Rhine with the destroyed bridges over it had a frightening grandeur on the day when I crossed over the Engineers' bridge. There were black clouds broken by glass-clear fragments of sky. Gleams of light fell on the cathedral which, being slightly damaged, looks like a worn Gothic tapestry of itself with bare patches in the roof through which one sees the canvas structure. But it is the comparatively undamaged cathedral which gives Cologne what it still retains of character. One sees that this is and was a great city, it is uplifted by the spire of the cathedral from being a mere heap of rubble and a collection of walls, like the towns of the Ruhr. Large buildings round the cathedral have been scratched and torn, and, forming a kind of cliff, they have a certain dignity like the cliffs and rocks under a church close to the sea.

The girders of the Rhine bridges plunged diagonally into black

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waters of the Rhine frothing into swirling white around them. They looked like machines of speed diving into the river, their beautiful lines emphasizing the sense of movement. Or where they do not swoop like javelins or speedboats into the river, broken girders hang from piers in ribbons, splinters and shreds, a dance of arrested movement. In the destroyed German towns one often feels haunted by the ghost of a tremendous noise. It is impossible not to imagine the rocking explosions, the hammering of the sky upon the earth, which must have caused all this.

The effect of these corpse-towns is a grave discouragement which influences everyone living and working in Germany, the Occupying Forces as much as the Germans. The destruction is *serious* in more senses than one. It is a climax of deliberate effort, an achievement of our civilization, the most striking result of co-operation between nations in the twentieth century. It is the shape created by our century as the Gothic cathedrals are the shape created by the Middle Ages. Everything has stopped here, that fusion of the past within the present, integrated into architecture, which forms the organic life of a city, a life quite distinct from that of the inhabitants who are after all only using a city as a waiting room on their journey through time: that long, gigantic life of a city has been killed. The city is dead and the inhabitants only haunt the cellars and basements. Without their city they are rats in the cellars, or bats wheeling around the towers of the cathedral. The citizens go on existing with a base mechanical kind of life like that of insects in the crannies of walls who are too creepy and ignoble to be destroyed when the wall is torn down. The destruction of the city itself with all its past as well as its present, is like a reproach to the people who go on living there. The sermons in the stones of Germany preach nihilism.

PROFESSOR C——

As soon as I had arrived in Bonn, I called on Professor C——. Although half of Bonn is destroyed, his ground-floor flat was in an almost untouched part of the city, and he and his wife were still living there.

I had known C—— very well before 1933. He lectured in modern languages at Heidelberg and then at Bonn. He was one of the foremost exponents of French literature in Germany under the Weimar Republic and had written books on Balzac, the French Symbolists and Proust.

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In the summer of 1931 a friend had given me an introduction to C—— in Baden Baden. At this time he was a man of 45. We went for many walks together in the Black Forest, during which he talked much of literature. He was the only teacher I had (for he was, in effect, my teacher) who never lost sight of the direct connection between literature and living. It is difficult to define this, except to say that he talked about every subject concretely, which made one feel that one could grasp hold of and use it to enable one to live better one's own life. Another of his characteristics as a teacher was his clear grasp of what I could and could not learn. He never gave me the feeling that I ought to be good at things of which I had no understanding. He gave me instead a sense of both my limitations and my potentialities.

Shortly after I had first met him, C—— married. His wife had formerly been his student. After this I used to go every year or so to visit them, here at Bonn. He had an excellent library and many interesting things. He lived well, liking good company, good food and good wine. He and Frau C—— travelled much, particularly in France, Italy and Spain. He had connections with the outstanding writers and scholars of these countries and he was generally respected.

After Hitler's seizure of power it would have been easy for him to leave Germany and go to Paris, Madrid, Rome, Oxford or Cambridge. His position in Germany was made no easier by the fact that he had, in 1932, published a book in which he violently and even hysterically denounced the activities of the Nazis in the German Universities. This book nevertheless was a defence of the German tradition, written in a nationalist spirit. Besides attacking the Nazis, it attacked the proletarianization of literature and it criticized the influence of Jewish ideas.

Since 1933, I have often wondered why C—— didn't leave Germany. I think really the reason was a passion for continuity, a rootedness in his environment which made him almost immovable. He had modelled his life on the idea of that Goethe who boasted that during the Napoleonic struggle he had been like a mighty cliff towering above and indifferent to the waters raging hundreds of feet beneath him. If he always detested the Nazis he also had little sympathy for the Left, and the movement to leave Germany was for the most part a Leftwards one. Above all, he may have felt that it was his duty as a non-political figure, to stay in Germany, in order to be an example before the young people of the continuity of a wiser and greater German tradition. In spite of everything, he was very German.

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From 1933 to 1939 I saw little of him because I was scarcely ever in Germany, but I remember staying with him for a few days in 1934. At that time he did not concern himself with politics, but his flat had become a centre where every visitor came and upbraided the regime, usually from a Catholic point of view. It so happened that I told him there were a few people in England who thought that although the Nazis stood for many things of which the English should disapprove, nevertheless there was an idealist side to the movement, and that Hitler himself was an idealist unaware of the evil of some of the men around him.

C—— got up from the chair in his study where he was sitting when I said this, and said: 'If you think that, come for a walk with me.' We went along the shore of the Rhine. When we had got almost as far as Godesberg, he stopped and pointing with his stick, said: 'Do you see that hotel? Well, that's the hotel where those rascals, Hitler with them, stayed a few weeks ago, and deliberately plotted the murders which took place on June 30th.' (Incidentally, it was the hotel where Chamberlain later visited Hitler). He looked at me with an expression of finality. Then, surprisingly, he burst out laughing. We walked back to the house.

During the next years I heard from friends that his life became increasingly difficult. At first he seemed indifferent to the Nazis and went on teaching, while refusing to do any of the things which the Nazis required of him. I suppose that later on he must have compromised to some extent, or he would have been imprisoned. Apparently he became more and more unhappy and was driven into greater isolation. Sylvia Beach, who saw him in Paris in 1936 or '37, told me that then, before he would talk to her, he insisted on taking a taxi to a café in a suburb, and even then he kept on looking round to see if he was observed. He had to stop teaching French and took to Mediæval Latin. Then, finally, he gave up teaching almost entirely. He and his wife saw almost no one. His reputation became gradually smothered until he was scarcely known amongst the younger Germans. Ten years ago he was well known inside as well as outside Germany. Today, in Germany, he is only known to scholars.

The rooms which had once been well lit, pleasantly furnished, were now bare and dingy. As I came in through the front door, I saw another door on my right with a notice on it: NO ADMITTANCE. FOR OFFICERS ONLY. This had been put up by the Americans who had requisitioned part of the flat when they were in Bonn. It was being kept up as a memento.

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C—— was moved to see me. He took me into his library, now just a bare empty room with no carpets, very few books on the shelves, and just enough furniture for an alcove to be used as a dining room whilst the other end of the room was used as a study.

We plunged very quickly into explanations. I said that I had come to inquire into the intellectual life of Bonn. C—— said that there was almost no intellectual life left in the whole of Germany, but that nevertheless it was important that I should talk to people and excellent that a writer like myself should understand what was happening in Germany.

Within quite a few minutes and before any of us had mentioned our personal histories during the past five years, we were talking about the war. The C——'s wanted me to understand that many students from Bonn had gone into the war not wishing to win, but fighting desperately. They fought for their country, but 'they had that monster on their backs—the Nazi Party. They knew that whether Germany won or lost, they themselves were bound to lose.'

C—— said rather aggressively that anyone outside Germany who maintained that it was possible for the German anti-Nazis to prevent war, should make a serious study of the effects of government by terror, propaganda, lies and perverted psychology in modern scientific conditions. 'You seemed to expect us to stand up or go out into the street and say that we opposed the war and the Party. But what effect could that have had except our own destruction? It certainly would not have stopped the war. It was not *we* in Germany but you, the democracies, the English, the French and the Americans, who could have stopped the war at the time of the Occupation of the Rhineland. We were all confidently expecting that you would do so at the time. What were we to think when you let Hitler march in?'

'Don't you think, then, that Germany is responsible for this war?'

'Of course,' C—— replied; 'it is absolutely clear that Hitler started the war. There is no doubt about that at all. It is the first fact that every German must realize. In spite of all Goebbels' propaganda, every German who says otherwise is either an ignoramus or a liar. The trouble with the Germans is that they have no experience of political freedom. Right up to the last century they were governed by ridiculous little princelings. Then they came under the Prussian militarists. They have never freed themselves from servile habits of mind. They have never governed themselves.'

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I answered: 'I can quite well understand that the general mass of the people were first deceived and then terrorized by the Nazis. What I can't understand, though, is that no section of educated Germans ever put up any united resistance. For example, how is it that the teaching profession, as a whole, taught all the Nazi lies about race and deliberately set about perverting the minds of the young? I can't believe that this would have happened in England. A majority of English teachers would refuse to teach what they considered to be lies about history and biology. Still less would they teach their pupils to lie. And they would have refused to teach hatred.'

C—— shrugged his shoulders and sighed deeply. 'Although some teachers did in fact resist, right up to the end, nevertheless the profession as a whole was swamped by Nazi ideas. Alas, too many German teachers are militarist and nationalist in their minds before they are teachers, and they think of nothing but teaching discipline. Unfortunately this is also true to a great extent of the Universities.'

'If you condemn the whole teaching profession of a nation, surely that is very serious? It implies condemning the whole nation?'

'You cut off the head of a king several hundred years ago. The French also rose against their king and their aristocrats. The basis of freedom in the democracies is the idea that it is always possible to revolt against a tyrant. The Germans have never risen against a tyrant. Even today, it isn't the Germans who have risen against Hitler. The Germans always submit.'

The C——'s had many complaints about the Occupation. What struck me in conversation with them and with other intelligent Germans was the undiscriminating nature of these complaints. Some of the things complained about, though distressing, seemed inevitably the result of losing a war. For example, when Bonn University was occupied (Bonn was first occupied by the Americans), an American soldier was observed in the library tearing all those books which had been rescued from the fire, and which were laid on a table, out of their bindings, and then hacking at them with a bayonet. On being approached by a Professor, he explained his conduct by saying: "I hate everything German.' This story was circulated in University circles as an example of American barbarity. To my mind, it illustrates nothing except the stupidity inevitably attendant on war. In war, those countries which are invaded suffer from the defects of the invader's civilization. Thus places invaded and occupied by the Americans suffer inversely from the extravagance of American civilization. The Americans, accustomed to a climate of over-production,

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have been extravagant in their destruction of furniture, grand pianos, books, etc.

Some of the complaints I heard were almost frivolous. For example, in Bonn, people complain that the Americans were far too slow in liberating the Rhineland, and, particularly, Bonn. The story of the townspeople is that in the autumn of 1944 the Nazis were in full flight across the Rhine. Only frightened S.S. men, out of panic, fired a few shots. At that the Americans made a full-scale retreat of fifteen miles and did not advance again until the spring of 1945. 'We can understand that American civilization is unwarlike and that the Americans do not want to practise military virtues,' a professor said to me, 'but you have no idea how difficult it is being conquered by a people who can't fight. Everything happens so slowly.' This kind of complaint, coming from an intelligent man, illustrates the amazing egotism of the Germans, which has now been accentuated by their having been cut off for so long from the rest of the world.

Some of the complaints were directed against what may have been an unwise tendency of the Allies to treat the Germans as the Germans had treated others. For example, we were very harsh in our methods of requisitioning. Families were given four hours' notice before their houses were requisitioned. They were only allowed to take away with them the barest necessities, which did not include beds or cupboards. In fact, they could only take a few kitchen utensils and a little personal luggage. Although many would justify it, no one would deny that great hardships were caused. For example, people were deprived of their means of livelihood, a seamstress of her sewing machine, a piano teacher of his piano, etc. The Germans so deprived then had to plead with the occupying authorities to get some piece of their property back. Usually property was not returned. All of this led to a considerable waste of time. It would perhaps have been better if at the time of requisitioning an officer had decided on the spot what the people whose houses were being requisitioned could take with them.

On two occasions I saw large American trucks (when the Americans were leaving Bonn) drive right over civilian vehicles which were parked against the pavement. In one case a car was transformed in an instant into the shape of a twisted biscuit tin, in another a cart was utterly smashed and the horse thrown wounded on to its back. In neither case did the American truck driver ever turn round to see what he had done.

If one measures these things against the monstrous cruelties

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committed by the Nazis they are, of course, nothing. I cannot make up my mind whether there is any sense in measuring them in this way. Yet it seems to me that a driver of a truck, when, chewing his gum, he drives over a German horse and cart, may perhaps have an image of Nazi crimes in Holland in his mind. The whole development of our time can, as it were, absorb a good many such small satisfactions in the way of revenge. But one should never lose sight of the fact that the one and only true measure of our actions is not a picture of the past, but one of a future in which it is possible for the peoples of the world to live at peace with one another.

The C——'s complained a good deal about non-fraternization. How, they asked, could we influence the Germans if we were not allowed to speak to them nor they to us? Did we realize that Germany had been completely isolated from ideas outside the country for many years, and that now, unless we gave some lead and introduced our own ideas, Germany would be left in a mental vacuum? The Vacuum became quite a key phrase at this time. Finally it even occurred in a directive from Field Marshal Montgomery.

C— drew my attention to the contrast between our behavior and our propaganda. Thousands of Germans during the war, especially during the last stages, had listened to the B.B.C. and to American broadcasts promising democracy, freedom, discrimination between our treatment of the good and the bad Germans. Was it in our own interest now to create the impression that our propaganda had simply been empty words and vain promises, like that of Goebbels?

BONN

I left the C——'s and walked back through Bonn towards the Officers' Transit Mess.

A pleasant road, overshadowed with trees, running parallel to the Rhine, leads from the end of the road where they live to the centre of Bonn which, from this end of the town, may be said to begin with the University whose entrance bridges the road. On either side of this broad leafy road there were houses and hotels, many of them destroyed. Heaps of rubble often made it impossible to keep to the pavement.

Beyond the University gate everything, including almost the whole of the main old University buildings, the shopping centre and the market-place is destroyed. Over the gate the wall of the University stood, a yellow colour, surmounted by the gleaming gold

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statue of St. George against the sky among the high boughs of chestnut trees. But there was nothing except charred emptiness behind this outer wall. Between the centre of the town and the Rhine everything had been smashed by shell fire in the last stages of the fighting. Occasionally I saw written on a wall some surviving Nazi slogan—'VICTORY OR SIBERIA,'—'BETTER DEATH THAN SIBERIA,' 'WE SHALL WIN—THAT IS CERTAIN,' or 'THE DAY OF REVENGE WILL COME.' There was something strangely evangelical about these slogans, and one would not have been surprised to see 'GOD IS LOVE' or ABANDON HOPE ALL YE WHO ENTER HERE' among them. Frequently there appeared on the wall a black looming figure with a question mark over his shoulder. At first I thought this might be one of the Nazi leaders, but it turned out to be a warning against spies.

By the banks of the Rhine, the beer gardens, hotels and great houses were all smashed to pieces. In a space amongst the ruins which formed a protected nest, there was a burnt-out German tank. Scattered all round it ammunition lay on the ground—shells the shape of Rhine wine bottles, still partly enclosed in their careful packings of straw and fibre.

The great bridge was down, collapsed into the river. Close to it, by a landing stage, an A.A. gun which was being used as an anti-tank gun, was still pointing with exemplary precision at the end of the bridge on the opposite side of the Rhine.

Bonn stank as much as Cologne or as the towns of the Ruhr. In addition to the persistent smell which never left one alone—like an Over-Good Companion—the town was afflicted by a plague of small green midges which bred I suppose in all the rubble and also in rubbish heaps, for no rubbish had been collected for several months and in many streets there were great heaps of waste with grass and even tall potato plants growing out of a mass of grit and stalks and peel.

At night these small flies crowded thick on the walls of the bedrooms. At mealtimes they got into any and every drink. One night I went for a walk along the Rhine. When I returned, the sun had set and the flies lay like a thick bank of London pea-soup fog on either side of the river. They swarmed into my eyes, nostrils and hair, dissolving into a thin green splodge of slime when I tried to brush them off.

Every few hours during the day, Bonn was shaken by a considerable explosion. This was caused by attempts on the part of the

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crew of a tug in the Rhine to blow up those parts of the collapsed bridge which were obstructing river traffic.

The shops sold practically nothing except bread and a few other rationed things. In many shops one saw various powders, which were supposed, according to their labels, to impart a pleasant ersatz flavour to food. One bookshop sold books which had apparently been dug out of rubble heaps. They were soggy with damp and they smelt like the rest of Bonn. Nevertheless, Bonn had more books than any other town in the British zone, so far as I could discover. A few art shops sold prints and baroque statuettes.

Life seemed to have sunk in the bodies of the people to the level of the rubble in the basements and cellars of the houses. Yet certain improvements took place in conditions during the few weeks in which I was there. For example, the trams started running. The postmen started delivering postcards (letters were as yet not allowed). More trains were to be seen, and they went for longer distances. The trains were a fantastic sight. Not only did people hang on outside carriages, on the running boards, but also they clung on the buffers and crouched on the roof. Trains were covered with people as with flies.

Germans often grumbled about the occupation, but it is only fair to add that they did not complain so much of material conditions as of mental ones. Middle-class people made incredible journeys, in crowded goods trucks, sitting on heaps of coal for days and nights, and at the end of the jorney they said nothing of it. Some of the more distinguished Germans refused to take part in the German Civil Administration because they said that those who took part were benefiting by the Occupation and living better than other Germans. I have even heard of cases of the secretaries of officers, certainly not chosen for their moral qualities, refusing gifts of food for themselves and their families because they wished to show that Germans can 'take it.'

CONVERSATIONS

Professor Von Beckerath is a vital, eager non-conformist type with the energetic yet rather gray appearance of the teacher who regards all men who are willing to learn from him as equal.

He has a pleasant book-lined study in a house at Godesberg where he lives with his family. These houses are by no means unlike the stucco early nineteenth century houses of St. John's Wood, except that they are situated above the banks of the Rhine.

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Von Beckerath was critical of the B.B.C. He said that before the capitulation everyone had been eager to hear it, but now it was boring and cautious and none wanted to listen. The items of news from Germany were of exactly the kind which, in a country where there are almost no communications and where each part is cut off from every other part, were least interesting. To hear in Hamburg that thirty trains had gone from Cologne to Dusseldorf, or in Dusseldorf that six ships had arrived in Rostock, was like hearing of events in China. What would be far more interesting—if it is impolitic to talk to Germans about Germany—would be to have at any rate a serious discussion of the situation in England, or in France, or in America. The Germans know almost nothing about the situation of the rest of the world outside Germany. The broadcasts to Germany should therefore have a broad general political interest.

He asked: 'Why cannot the B.B.C. discuss the future of Germany? Why cannot it comment on the implications of such actions as the taking over of the I.G. Farbenindustrie, actions which cause anxiety, because the I.G.F. manufacture many essential things, besides making armaments?'

I asked him what he thought of articles such as those of Franz Werfel and Thomas Mann, which had appeared in the English-controlled German press. In his article, Werfel had written: 'Apart from Pastor Niemoeller, there was not visible amongst you one single man who honoured God more than the Gestapo.'

'Werfel wollen wir ablegen,' 'We can put Werfel aside,' he answered. 'He is a man who sees everything in terms of pure black or pure white, without understanding the real issues involved. Thomas Mann is, of course, more to be respected. He is a great literary artist, but as Germany's preceptor he has always cut an unhappy figure. During the last war he wrote a book in defence of Prussianism. He lacks moral authority. What we need is simple, serious men to speak to us, men whom we can respect and trust. There may be such amongst the refugees, but the whole problem of our attitude towards the refugees is very involved.'

The Rector of Bonn University, Dr. Konen, is a vigorous man of seventy. He has a worn, thin narrow face with a refined spiritual expression. He also has a sense of humour. He likes to illustrate what he is saying with metaphors, parables, images, stories. But he does not become garrulous.

Konen lives not far from von Beckenrath in a house on the hills of Godesberg above the Rhine, looking out over the river towards

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the beautiful Siebensgebirge. His house is old fashioned, crowded with furniture, but at the same time clean and bright.

Konen explained the situation at Bonn University since Hitler came to power and during the war. He said that after 1933 the Professors were divided among themselves into several groups. There were those who actively supported the Nazis in trying to introduce a completely nazified education into the Universities; those who were active Nazis but who nevertheless retained a certain respect for objective values and for the tradition of the Universities which they wished should remain independent; those who were non-active Party members; those who were not Party members but who did not oppose the Party; those who remained detached from politics; and, lastly, those who seriously tried to resist the influence of the Nazis. He said that about half the teachers in the University never supported the Nazis, and that there were never more than 45% who were Party members. On the whole, he thought that a high level of teaching was maintained.

I said that most observers in England had the impression that the minds of the young were poisoned by Nazi teaching.

He said that the young were confused, spiritually starved, but not poisoned in the simple and direct way that we imagined. 'Try and imagine what it was like for a young person to be educated in Germany. If he became whole-heartedly a Nazi, he would be involved in endless duties and fatigues. His time would never be his own. He would be allowed no independence of thought. He would be expected to break away from all loyalties to his home and family. His parents, if they wished him to be a Nazi, would have to surrender him body and soul to the Party. In the early days a good many young people were swept completely into the Movement. But later on it was not so. During the war many of my students have visited me. I can assure you that most of them have wanted nothing more from the future than a wife, a home and a job.'

As I was leaving the house, he stopped me at the door and said vigorously: 'I have every confidence that if I am asked to teach my students again, I shall be able to do so. I am not frightened of the students being beyond my control. A University represents a certain benefit to the community, like a farm, and as cows provide milk, so we professors can satisfy an intellectual need.'

Professor Cloos, geologist, whom I met in the classroom of an undamaged building of the University in a suburb, is a small temperamental man with untidy long hair and a sunburnt out-of-door

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appearance. He has a very emphatic manner. He has thrown himself into the Civil Government, organizing educational activities. He has arranged such concerts and recitals as have recently been given for civilians in Bonn.

Like the other professors whom I had visited, I deliberately selected him for interviewing because he had a reputation for being opposed to the regime. He was emphatic in his defence of his students. 'The brown colour of the Nazis has spread less far than you imagine,' he said. 'In any case, the Rhineland is a part of Germany which has always resisted the Nazis most. I myself have always retained my influence over my pupils because they knew I was no Nazi. It was the Nazi professors who were not respected and who therefore lost their influence. Some of the students passionately desired Germany's defeat. Here in this classroom, there was a reunion of my students to toast the allied victory when the Americans landed in North Africa.'

He said that several medical students evaded military service, not because they were cowards, but because they were always opposed to the war. As a geographer he was able to help a few of them to escape into Switzerland by showing them on the map the places where it was easiest to cross the frontier. He said that academic youth had always been a centre of resistance to the Nazis.

These were the statements of exceptional Germans, and they certainly do not represent the views of the ordinary German. They are the views of the few intellectuals whom Hitler always railed against because they never had faith in German victory and they always stood outside the German community.

Even these men had certain views which, I think, show the influence of ten years of Nazi ideology. For example, they all viewed the outside world entirely in terms of power. They interpreted the Zones of allied occupation strategically. The British Zone was to them *Die Bruecke,* the British bridgehead on the continent. They noted that the decision of the British that they must occupy an area of the continent from the mouth of the Rhine to the mouth of the Elbe, meant an abandonment of the former British reliance on the bridgehead of France. They did not think that we could afford ever to give up *Die Bruecke,* and they therefore assumed that their fate and future was now cast together with that of Britain. They pointed out that the British, the Rhinelanders and the people of Hamburg had interests and characteristics in common, amongst which was to be counted a hatred of Prussia, and of the centralized government of Germany from Berlin. They regretted very much that we did not firmly and

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definitely announce our intentions with regard to Germany, so that they could envisage their future as part of the British Empire more clearly. For it was as part of the British Empire that they now were ready to see themselves, and there is nothing very striking about the question of a prominent Catholic priest, Father R——, to me: Did I believe that, in ten years, the British Zone might be granted Dominion Status?

Another attitude which they shared was a bitter and unconcealed resentment and fear of the French whose occupation of part of the Rhineland they regarded as the greatest of the indignities which they had to endure. The French, they said, were beaten, they were finished as a nation and as an Empire, and the resurrection of the corpse of France by the power of the allies was intolerable to them.

Until the day of the atom bomb, they shared in common with nearly all Germans, the view that Russia would eventually either occupy the whole of the European mainland or else be defeated by the Western powers. The habit of envisaging every situation in terms of power, forced their minds to this conclusion. They pointed out that the greater part of the American army soon would have left the continent and then that the balance of power between Russia and the West would be altered decisively in favour of Russia. To the German mind, the conclusion that Russia will attack the West is inevitable.

GUILT

One morning I called on C—— again. He was sitting at his table which was piled up with many heaps of books. One of these was *The Ondt and the Gracehopper,* a fragment of *Finnegans Wake*. This contained many marginal notes by C—— explaining the derivations of some of these punning portmanteau inventions of Joyce. The book was inscribed to C—— by James Joyce.

For some time we talked about Joyce. Then he said: 'I want to sell this book, but I don't know how much it is worth.' I said 'I'll try to find out in London. But in any case you couldn't sell it there now, on account of various Exchange regulations.' 'That does not matter. In a year or eighteen months would do.' "Why do you want to sell your books? Are you hard up?' 'No I'm not. And in any case there is nothing to buy in Germany. I used to like beautiful books and charming things, but now I want to get rid of them all. I have collected bad editions of all the books which I shall want to

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read during the rest of my life.' He pointed to some drab rows of books on his shelves. I said: 'I shouldn't sell your books, because in five year's time everything will be different, and then you will probably regret not having beautiful things.'' 'No,' he said, 'I know it will be impossible for any German to get out of all this—with any dignity or self-respect—for more than five years. We have made ourselves hated all over the world, and now we are condemned to imprisonment in the ruin which is Germany. In five years or in ten years time I shall be an old man. I am already sixty.'

Later I discovered that he certainly had another reason for selling his things. He was afraid that during the coming winter his wife might need a store of cash in order to save them from starvation.

We talked of France. I told him that I had seen Sylvia Beach, who was formerly Joyce's publisher. I said that she had been interned during the Occupation of France. I told him that before the war I remembered seeing in her shop a beautiful girl aged 18 or so. This girl was Jewish. The Germans had ordered Sylvia to give her notice. Sylvia explained that she was an American and that as a citizen of the United States, she did not recognize the anti-Jewish laws. The Germans then interned Sylvia. The girl was put on a train for Poland. She was never heard of again.

I spoke also of my friend Ghisa Drouin. She also was Jewish and she had, while caring for her family in Paris, been subject to the laws relating to Jews. She had to wear the Star of David, to sit on a special bench in the park, to travel in a special compartment of the Metro, and she was only allowed to shop between certain hours in the morning. In order to keep her family, she had to shop at other hours, knowing all the time that if she was caught she also would be put on a train bound for Poland.

When I was in Paris in May I dined with the Drouins. Ghisa sat at one end of the table, her husband at the other end, and opposite me was their little son, Georges, aged 10. Ghisa started talking about the Germans when they were in Paris. She told how they made a special choice sometimes of deporting the oldest and the youngest member of a family, a grandmother and a grandchild, for example.

At this, Georges, who had been watching us with large eyes said: 'And they took away one of my comrades from school.'

'Yes,' said Ghisa quickly, 'they took away a school friend of his aged 11, together with his grandmother, aged 75.'

'And we never heard of him again,' said Georges. On his mouth there was a strange expression, a frozen mouth of a Greek tragedy

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mask. We changed the subject and talked of other things.

There was a silence. Then C—— touched my arm and said: 'When you spoke of guilt a few nights ago, I wanted to tell you something. It is that the Germans *are* guilty of the most terrible crimes, and that they can build nothing new unless they repent of them.

'After the last war, when I was a young man, I was full of hope that we could build a new Germany. But we failed and during these years I have felt an increasing and indescribable disgust for *this* people. I have no faith in them at all. And as for myself, I know that I shall be an old man before we have recovered from this.

'What can we hope of a people who accepted as a slogan Goering's 'Guns instead of butter,' and who yet at the same time were so incapable of drawing conclusions that right up to the outbreak of war they went round proclaiming "The Fuhrer is so clever, he will never lead us into war?".'

POLES

Sitting on a bench under some trees, gazing out over the Rhine, with empty expressions on their faces were six men dressed in ragged Reichswehr uniforms. I thought at first that they were German prisoners, but on talking to them, I found that they were Poles.

They talked very bad German, expressing themselves with uncouth, heavy gestures, rather than with words. Two of them were much younger than the others, and, in their grey blue uniforms, with their thin, pinched faces, looked like Picasso clowns of the Blue Period.

"You English are much too kind to these filthy Germans, much too kind,' one of them said heavily. Another of them took up his meaning: 'Now they all go round here, they all go round, everyone of them, saying "I was never a Nazi, no I was never a Nazi".' A third went on: "They all take off their hats, they all bow. They can't be kind enough to you, not friendly enough."

'But what were they like before?' This chorus went on, passing from one to another of them, taken up from mouth to mouth, while, when one was speaking, the others relapsed into morose silence: 'We were herded together like cattle. We were made to work like slaves.' 'Nothing was bad enough for us.' 'When we arrived in trucks at railway stations, the children used to gather around us and shout "Dirty Polack!" "Filthy Polack!".' 'We never received a kind word

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from anyone.' 'We were here for five years, and no one ever looked at us nicely or showed us a kind act. Not one.'

The oldest man said: 'Thirty thousand people were killed in the town where we came from. My son here is with me.' 'Yes,' said his son, 'I am with my father, but we know nothing of my mother and my sister. All the others here have lost all their relatives.'

There was a silence, then one of them said: 'We were paid 20 marks a month for our labour, but most even of that was taken away.' 'Look, two of us were told to unload a whole railway wagon in a morning.' 'If we couldn't do it, we were fined of our wages.'

'We would sooner work twenty years under the Americans or the British than for one year under the Germans.'

SOME CONCLUSIONS

It is surely true that there exists now, in all the world, an international of well-intentioned men and women. If I were to define their characteristics, I would say that they were not necessarily either democratic or anti-democratic, left or right, or the representatives of any class. On the whole, though, they regard the evils of the democratic systems of government as decisively less than those of the authoritarian ones, their sympathies are more often towards the left than towards the right (although not always so), and a proof of their good will is a serious concern with the welfare of ordinary people. Their conscious or unconscious faith is Christianity, and probably the most serious division of opinion between these people of good will is as to whether they regard human nature as more good than bad or more bad than good. But as to aims they would agree that at this stage in the world's history any sacrifice of nationalist or class interest is not only justified but necessary if it is in the interests of establishing peace; that all aggressive nationalist intentions are to be absolutely condemned; that civilization can only be saved if it is founded on a double security of peace and social justice. Above all these people feel that it is their duty to express and make clear these aims which are already in men's hearts and minds, so that when it becomes clear that they are in fact the deepest wishes of all people in all nations, the doubt and suspicion and self-interest which obstruct their being fulfilled will be the more easily cleared away.

If the previous paragraph sketches a state of mind which is very wide-spread and which indeed predominates in every international conference which I have ever attended (though it rarely leads to any

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results), then one can scarcely doubt that there are Germans, living in Germany, who have felt like this. One aspect of the German problem is not that there are no Germans of good will, but simply that there are not enough of them.

The result of this isolation is that the German intellectuals show all the defects of their weakness, sometimes (as in the case of C——, considering themselves quite outside the German people, by whom C—— is 'disgusted'), and sometimes going over to the cause of the strong, just because they find themselves so weak.

The impression of the Polish prisoners as to the behaviour of the overwhelming majority of Germans whom they encountered in their long wanderings, is undoubtedly a true one. It is a terrible testimony which explains why now in every corner of Germany one stumbles upon some new horror, a mass grave or a prison camp.

At the same time, there were undoubtedly a few Germans who right through the war did not believe in a German victory, and others who feared such a victory almost as much as the enemies of Germany. These were the intellectuals whom Hitler was always railing against, and although one has no sympathy with Hitler's point of view, there was a certain shrewdness in his analysis of these people as being completely cynical, and against everything and everyone. They had lost all faith, because they suffered from a sense of depression the extent of which one can only understand when one has lived for some weeks in Germany.

One great problem is to revive the political life of Germany in a democratic sense. Few people have fully realized the difficulty of this problem, which is that although there are political parties in Germany, there are no real political issues, since neither the fate nor the resources of Germany are in German hands. Political experiments in Germany are rather like political experiments and 'party government' in a progressive school of decrepit boys and girls, living amongst ruins.

Another great problem—which I have never seen discussed—is to create a body of opinion and to present to the German people personalities who are not completely identified with the Occupying Forces, and whom the Germans can respect as being outstanding individuals. It seems to me that this is where the German intelligentsia might play a most important rôle. For this is the only section of German society which includes outstanding individuals of good will. Moreover these historians, philosophers, theologians, etc., are not discussing problems which conflict with the interests of the Occupa-

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tion. At the same time, the need of spiritual leadership in Germany is very great. There is certainly, as Mr. Bevin has pointed out, as great a spiritual as a material crisis of starvation in Germany.

From this point of view we can regard Germany as Sodom. If we can find ten good Germans, we can save the spiritual life of Germany. That is to say, if we can put ten Germans whom the Germans can respect as being not only Germans, but men accepted and listened to by the outside world, into touch, through every possible means of freedom of movement and publicity, with the German people, and with the outside world, we shall have shown the Germans the path which leads them up from despair and darkness, the path which also leads them into the European community.

There is a great need in Germany to discuss—on the highest intellectual level—not only questions of party, but also questions of religion, questions of German history, the German conception of power, the way of life. In Germany there may be men of exemplary disinterestedness—men who have always been against the Nazis—who can speak to the Germans of these things which concern them more immediately than politics. Such Germans are to be found in the concentration camps, in the Churches and the Universities. Some of them are to be found amongst the refugees. However, the refugees can only influence Germany if they are prepared to give up everything: that is to say, if they are prepared like Karl Barth, who has returned to Bonn University, to go back to their country and live there as Germans. The greatest need of the Germans today is for personal examples of outstanding people who can teach them how to overcome their despair and how to harness the guilt to active repentance.

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The Root of the Chestnut Tree*

JEAN-PAUL SARTRE

I CANNOT say that I feel any sense of relief or satisfaction; on the contrary, it has left me staggering. But I have achieved my aim. I know now what I wanted to know; everything that has happened to me since last January has become clear. The Nausea has not left me and I do not think it will in a hurry; but it has ceased to be something I endure; it is not a disease or a passing fever: it is me.

It happened this way. A little while ago I was in the City Park. The root of the chestnut tree sank into the ground directly under my bench. I no longer remembered that it was a root. The name of things had vanished and with them their significance, the uses to which they are put, the faint traces men make on their surfaces to guide them. I was sitting somewhat bent over, my head down, alone in the presence of that dark and twisted mass, that brute mass of which I was afraid. Then I had a sudden illumination.

It took my breath away. Never, until a few days ago, had I had an inkling of what it means to "exist." I had been like other people, like the folks who walk along the seashore in their spring clothes. Like them I used to say, "the sea *is* green; that white spot up there *is* a seagull," but I did not feel that they existed, that the seagull was an "existing seagull." Ordinarily existence is hidden; it is here, all around us, in us; it *is* us and you cannot say a word without speaking of it; but you do not touch it. Before, when I thought I was thinking about it, I could not have been thinking of anything; my head was a blank, or there was just one word in my head, the word "being." Or else I was thinking—how shall I put it? I was thinking of *belongingness*: I said to myself that the ocean belonged to the category of green objects, or that green was one of the attributes of the ocean. Even when I looked at things I was a thousand miles from thinking they existed: I looked upon them as part of the setting. I took them in my hands, they served me as tools, I anticipated their ways of resisting me. But all that took place on the surface. If any-

* This is a chapter from the novel *La Nausée*.

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one had asked me what existence was, I would have answered in all good faith that it was hardly more than an empty form which things acquired from the outside and which in no way altered their nature. And then, there it was: all of a sudden, existence was there, as clear as day; the veil had suddenly been drawn from it. Existence was no longer a harmless abstraction; it was the pith and pulp of things: that root was made out of the very stuff of existence. Or rather, the root, the iron fence, the bench, the spotty grass of the lawn, all these had vanished; the diversity of things, their individuality was nothing but appearance, a varnish. This varnish had melted away, and what was left were soft, bare disorderly masses, monstrous and obscene in their frightful nudity.

I was careful not to make the slightest move, but I did not need to move to see the bandstand with its lamppost and blue columns, and the Velléda, behind the trees, surrounded by thick laurel bushes. All these objects—how shall I express it? They bothered me; I should have liked them to exist less strongly, with less lushness, more abstractly, with greater decorum. The chestnut tree pressed against my eyes. It was covered halfway with green rust; the bark was black and bloated and seemed to be made of boiled leather. The faint sound of running water made by the Masqueret Fountain flowed into my ears and nestled there, filling them with sighs; my nostrils were brimming over with a green and putrid smell. All things were gently, tenderly abandoning themselves to existence, like a weary woman who settles down to a good laugh, saying in a liquid voice: "It's good to laugh"; they exhibited themselves to one another, they abjectly confided in each other the fact of their existence. It was plain to see that there was no middle ground between non-existence and this paroxysm of abundance. If you existed, you had to *exist to that point,* to the point of green mold, of bloating, of obscenity. In another order, a circle, a melody, keeps its pure rigid lines. But existence is an acquiescence. The trees, the deep blue pillars, the gurgle of the fountain, the living smells, the wisps of heat fog floating in the cool air, a red-haired man digesting on a bench: all this sodden passivity, all these digestive actions taken together were outwardly vaguely comical. No, not . . . comical: it did not go that far, nothing that exists can be comical. There was a faint, elusive sort of resemblance to certain situations in vaudeville. We were a lot of existents that were ill at ease and in our own way; we did not have the slightest reason for being there, not one of us, and each existent, confused and vaguely troubled, felt that it was superfluous in relation to the rest. Superfluity: that was

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the only relationship I could establish between these trees, these iron gates, these pebbles. In vain did I try to *count* the chestnut trees, to locate them in relation to the Velléda, to compare their height with that of the plane trees: each one of them evaded the relationships in which I tried to fix it, overran them, isolated itself. I felt how arbitrary they were, these relationships (which I stubbornly maintained in order to delay the collapse of the human world—the world of measurements, quantities, directions); they no longer made an impress on things. Superfluous the chestnut tree just in front of me there, and a little to the left. Superfluous, the Velléda. . . .

And I—dispirited, listless, obscene, digesting, bandying about gloomy thoughts—I too was superfluous. Luckily I did not feel it—it was largely a matter of understanding—but I was uneasy because I was afraid of feeling it (even now I am afraid, afraid that it might take me by the back of the head and lift me off my feet like a big wave). I considered vaguely doing away with myself, so that at least one of those superfluous existences might be eliminated. But my death would have been superfluous. My corpse, my blood on the stones, among the plants, here in this inviting garden; and the worm-eaten flesh in the ground that received it; and my bones, too, cleaned and stripped, as slick as a tooth, would still have been superfluous: I was superfluous for all eternity.

My pen now traces the word Absurdity; a little while ago, in the park, it did not occur to me, but neither did I look for it. I did not need it: I did not think with words then, but *on things, with things*. Absurdity was not an idea in my head, nor a spoken sound, but that long dead snake there at my feet, that wooden snake. . . . Whether snake or claw or root or vulture's talon, what does it matter? . . . And, without formulating anything clearly, I knew that I had found the key to Existence, the key to my Nausea, to my own life. Actually, everything that I came to understand later can be reduced to this fundamental absurdity. Absurdity: another word; I am struggling with words; back there, I touched the thing. But I should like right here to settle the absolute character of this absurdity. In the bright little world of men a gesture or an event is absurd only relatively, relative to the circumstances accompanying it. The ravings of a mad man, for instance, are absurd relative to the situation, but not relative to his madness. But, just now, I experienced the absolute: the absolute or the absurd. That root, there was nothing relative to which it was not absurd. Oh! How can I put it into words? Absurd: relative to the pebbles, to the tufts of yellow grass, to the dry mud,

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to the trees, the sky, the green benches. Absurd, irreducible; nothing—not even a secret and profound frenzy in nature—could explain it. Obviously I did not know everything about it, I had not seen the seed develop nor the tree grow. But neither ignorance nor knowledge was of any importance in the face of this huge, wrinkled claw: the world of explanations and reasons is not the world of existence. A circle is not absurd, it can readily be explained by the rotation of a segment of a straight line around one of its extremities. But then, a circle does not exist. That root, on the other hand, existed to the extent that I was unable to explain it. Gnarled, inert, nameless, it fascinated me, filled my eyes, never allowed me to forget its own existence. I could say over and over again: "It is a root" . . . but to no avail. It was clear that by starting with its function as a root, as a suction pump, I would not arrive *at that,* at this tough, close-textured seal-like skin, this oily, callous, obstinate cortex. Its function explained nothing: it enabled one to understand in general what a root was, but not in the least *this root.* This root, with its color, its shape, its frozen motion, was . . . beneath all explanation. A little of each one of its attributes escaped from it, flowed away from it, becoming half solidified, almost a thing; each one of them was superfluous in the root and the entire base of the tree now seemed to overrun itself a little, to belie its own nature, to lose itself in a strange excess. I scraped my heel against that black claw: I should have liked to scuff it a little. For no reason, out of spite, to make the absurd pink of a scratch appear on the tanned leather, just to *play* with the absurdity of the world. But when I drew my foot away, I saw that the bark was still black.

Black? I felt the word becoming deflated, empty itself of all meaning with extraordinary rapidity. Black? The root *was not* black, it was not blackness that was on that piece of wood . . . it was . . . something else: black, like the circle, did not exist. I looked at the root : was it *more than black* or *nearly black?* But soon I stopped questioning myself because I felt I was in familiar territory. Yes, I had already anxiously scrutinized unmentionable objects, I had already tried—vainly—to think something *on them*: I had already felt their attributes, cold and inert, elude me, slip between my fingers. Adolphe's suspenders, the other evening, at the Rendezvous des Cheminots. They *were* not purple. I could still see the two indefinable spots on the shirt. And the smooth stone, that famous stone, the origin of this whole affair: it was not—I do not remember quite what it refused to be. But I had not forgotten its passive resistance. And the Autodidact's hand; I had taken it and shaken it one day at the Library, and I felt

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as if it were not altogether a hand. I thought of a big white worm . . . no, that was not quite it either. And the doubtful transparency of that glass of beer, at the Mably Café. Doubtful, suspect, that is what these things—these sounds, scents and tastes—were. When they slipped past you quickly, like a hare that has been flushed, and you did not pay much attention to them, it was possible to believe they were quite simple and reassuring, that there was a true blue, a true red, a true almond and violet scent in the world. But as soon as you waylaid them for a moment, this sense of comfort and security gave way to a profound malaise: colors, tastes, smells were never true, never their plain selves and nothing but themselves. The simplest, the most undecomposable attributes had something superfluous in themselves, relative to themselves, at the heart of them. That black there, against my foot, did not seem to be black but rather the confused effort to imagine black by someone who had never seen it and who could not stop himself, someone who had imagined an ambiguous state of being, beyond color. It *resembled* a color . . . but it also resembled a bruise, or a secretion, an oozing . . . and something else even, a smell, for instance; it blended into the smell of wet earth, of warm wet wood, into the dark smell overlying this sinewy wood like a coat of varnish, into the savor of sweet, ground-up fiber. I not only *saw* that black; seeing is an abstract creation, an idea that has been gone over, clarified, a man's idea. But that black, that sickly and amorphous presence, overran the sense of sight, and of smell and taste as well, from a long way off. . . . Then this excess turned into confusion, and in the end it was nothing because it was too much.

That moment was extraordinary. There was I, unmoving, unfeeling, in the throes of a frightful ecstasy. But in the very midst of this ecstasy something new had appeared: I understood my Nausea, I understood it perfectly. To tell the truth, I did not formulate my discovery in my own mind. But I believe it would be easy for me to put it into words now. The essence of it is contingency. I mean that, by definition, existence is not necessity. To exist is simply *to be here;* existents appear, may be encountered, but they can never be *deduced.* There are people, I believe, who have understood this. But they try to overcome this contingency by creating a being that is necessary and its own cause. Now, no necessary being can explain existence: contingency is not a pretense, an appearance that can be dispelled; it is the absolute, and consequently gratuitousness itself. Everything is gratuitous—this park, this city, and myself. At the time this truth happens to strike you, it makes your stomach turn over and everything around

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you begins to float, as it did for me the other evening, at the Rendezvous des Cheminots: that's what Nausea is; that's what the Stinkaroos —the people up on Green Hill and the rest of them—try to hide from themselves with their idea of law and order. But what a sorry lie: no one has any law and order; those people are completely gratuitous, like the rest; they do not know how to escape feeling superfluous. Deep inside, they *are superfluous,* amorphous and vague, without joy.

How long did this spell last? I *was* the root of the chestnut tree. Or rather I was wholly and completely consciousness of its existence. Still detached from it—since I was conscious of it—and yet lost in it; there was nothing but it. A consciousness that was uneasy and which still let itself go with its entire weight, suspended over that piece of inert wood. Time had come to a halt; it was a little dark pool at my feet; it was impossible for anything to come *after* that moment. I wanted to extricate myself from this sinister spell, but it did not even occur to me that it was possible; I was inside it; the black stump did not *move on,* it stayed there, in my eyes, just as an oversized piece of food stays in the throat. I could neither accept it nor reject it. No one can know the effort it cost me to raise my eyes. Or even whether I did raise them. Was I not rather blotted out for an instant, to be reborn the next, with my head raised and my eyes turned upward? Actually, I was not conscious of any transition. Only, all of a sudden, it was impossible for me to think the existence of the root. It had gone, and though I kept repeating to myself, it exists, it is still there, under the bench, next to my right foot, it no longer meant anything. Existence is not something which can be thought at a distance: it must invade you, come to a stop when it is upon you, make its weight felt on your chest like a huge lifeless animal—or else it is nothing at all.

That was all there was, my eyes were emptied and I was happy in my deliverance. Then, suddenly, there was a stirring before my eyes, slight and wavering: the wind was shaking the top of the tree.

I was not displeased to see something move; it was a change from all those motionless existences that stood looking at me like staring eyes. I kept saying to myself, as I watched the swinging of the branches: movements never exist completely, they are transitions, intermediaries between two existences, unaccented beats. I was preparing to see them appear out of oblivion, develop progressively, burst into being: at last I was going to surprise existence in the act of birth.

In less than three seconds all my hopes were blasted. There, on

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those hesitant branches groping blindly about them, I was unable to seize existence in motion. This idea of transition was still man's creation, an over-clear idea. All those tiny stirrings were isolated, they were there for themselves. They overran twigs and branches at every hand. They whirled about these dry hands, covering them with little tornadoes. Of course, a movement was not the same thing as a tree. But it was an absolute, nevertheless. A thing. Whatever met my eyes was a fullness. The tips of the branches swarmed with existences, with existences that were being constantly renewed and which were never born. The existing wind lighted on the tree like a big fly; and the tree shuddered. But the shudder was not a birth shudder, a transition from potentiality to act; it was a thing; a thing-shudder flowed into the tree, took possession of it, shook it, and suddenly abandoned it, turning round and round when it had gone. Everything was a fullness, everything was act, there were no unaccented beats; everything, even the least perceptible stir, was made of existence. And all those existents scurrying around the tree came from nowhere and were going nowhere. All at once they existed, and then, suddenly, they existed no more: existence is without memory; it retains nothing of what is gone, not even a recollection. Existence everywhere, infinite existence, superabundant, always and everywhere; existence—never limited except by existence.

I sank down on the bench, dazed, numbed by this profusion of beings without beginnings: everywhere there were unfoldings, flowerings; my ears hummed with existence; my very flesh palpitated and gaped, abandoned itself to the universal bursting of life. It was repulsive. "But why," I thought, "why so many existences, since they are all alike?" Of what use are so many similar trees? So many existences which had failed and stubbornly started over again, and again failed—like the clumsy efforts of an insect that has fallen on its back? (I was one of those efforts.) This abundance gave no impression of generosity, just the opposite. It was joyless, sickly, in its own way. These trees, these great ungainly bodies—and I began to laugh because all at once I remembered those mighty springtimes that are described in books, springtimes full of crackling noises, explosions and giant sproutings. And the imbeciles who talk about the will to power and the struggle for life. Had they never looked at an animal or a tree? This plane tree with its scaly bark, this half-rotten oak,—did they want me to regard them as mighty young forces straining toward the sky? And this root? No doubt I was expected to see it as a voracious claw, tearing open the earth to wrest from it

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its nourishment?

How was it possible for anyone to see things that way? Things are softness, flabbiness—yes. The trees fluttered. A straining skyward? A falling to earth rather; every minute I expected to see the tree trunks crumple up like burning paper, collapse and fall to the ground in a soft dark heap with deep folds in it. *They had no desire* to exist; they could not help themselves, that was it. So they performed their little tasks quietly, listlessly; the sap mounted to the ducts slowly, against its will, and the roots sank slowly into the soil. But they seemed on the point of leaving everything flat and returning to oblivion. Weary and old, they continue ungraciously to exist simply because they were too weak to die, because death could come to them only from the outside. What is there, short of a melody, which bears its own death proudly within itself, like an inner necessity? Only, a melody does not exist. Every existent is born without reason, perpetuates itself out of inertia and dies fortuitously. I sank back and closed my eyes. But at once the signal was given and my shut eyes were assailed by images which filled them with existences: existence is a fullness that man can never put behind.

Strange images. They represented a host of things. Not real things, but other things which resembled them. Wooden objects which resembled chairs or wooden shoes; other objects which resembled plants. Then there were two faces: it was the couple that had sat near me at lunch the other Sunday, at the Vézelize Brasserie. Fat, warm, sensual, absurd, with red earrings. I could see the shoulders and breast of the woman. Naked existence. Those two—this suddenly filled me with horror—those two continued to exist somewhere in Bouville; somewhere—in the midst of unspeakable odors?—that soft throat continued to be caressed by cool linens, to nestle in lace ruffles, and the woman continued to feel her breasts exist in her blouse and to think, "my little breasties," to smile mysteriously as she felt her breasts burgeoning and tingling. And then I cried out, and there I was with my eyes wide open.

Was it a dream, that enormous presence? It was there, poised over the park, tumbling from the trees, all soft, gluing up everything, a thick gelatinous mass. And was I in it, I, and the entire park? I was afraid, but above all I was furious, it seemed so stupid, so inappropriate. I despised that ignoble jelly. It was everywhere, everywhere! It reached to the sky, it spread out in all directions, it filled everything with its sprawling mass, and I could see layer upon layer of it, extending much farther than the limits of the park and the houses and

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Bouville. I was no longer in Bouville, nor anywhere, I was floating. I was not surprised; I was very well aware that it was the World, the naked World which had suddenly shown itself, and I was choking with rage against this huge absurd being. I could not even ask myself where it all came from, nor how it came about that a world, rather than nothing, existed. It made no sense; the world was present everywhere, in front and behind. There had been nothing *before* it. Nothing. There had never been a time when it might not have existed. That was what irritated me: of course there was *no reason* why this insidious larva should exist. It was impossible to think about it: in order to imagine oblivion, one had already to be here, in the world, alive and with his eyes wide open; oblivion was nothing but an idea in my head, an existing idea floating in this immensity: this oblivion had not come *before* existence, it was an existence, like any other, and had appeared after many others. I cried out: "What a filthy mess, what a mess!" and I shook myself to throw off the sticky slime but it clung to me and there was so much of it, tons and tons of existence, endless tons: I was suffocating under the weight of a tremendous ennui. Then, all of a sudden, the park emptied itself, as if through a big hole; the world disappeared in the same way it had come, or perhaps I woke up. In any event, I saw it no longer; there was still some yellow earth alongside me out of which a few dead branches pointed into space.

I got up to go. When I reached the gate, I turned around. The park looked inviting. I leaned against the gate and looked about me closely. The pleasant aspect of the trees, the laurel grove, had a meaning; that was the true secret of existence. I remembered that one Sunday, only about three weeks before, I had already detected a certain air of conspiracy about things. Was it me they were speaking to? It annoyed me to feel I had no way of knowing. No way whatsoever. Still, there it was, waiting; it resembled a glance. It was there, on the trunk of the chestnut tree . . . it *was* the chestnut tree: things, etc., or maybe they were thoughts, which had stopped on their way, forgotten themselves, forgotten what they had wanted to think and had remained just as they were, wavering, with a strange little twist of meaning that transcended them. That little meaning annoyed me: I *could* not understand it, not even if I had stayed there leaning against the iron gate for a thousand years; I had learned all that I could about existence. I left, returned to the hotel, and wrote down what you read here.

(*Translated from the French by Frances A. Lippman*)

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What Is Existenz Philosophy?

HANNAH ARENDT

AS DISTINCT from existentialism, a French literary movement of the last decade, Existenz philosophy has at least a century-old history. It began with Schelling in his late period and with Kierkegaard, developed in Nietzsche along a great number of as yet unexhausted possibilities, determined the essential part of Bergson's thought and of the so-called life-philosophy (*Lebensphilosophie*), until finally in postwar Germany, with Scheler, Heidegger, and Jaspers, it reached a consciousness, as yet unsurpassed, of what really is at stake in modern philosophy.

The term "Existenz" indicates, first, nothing more than the being of man, independent of all qualities and capacities that can be psychologically investigated. Thus far, what Heidegger once rightly remarked of "life-philosophy," that the name was about as meaningful as the botany of plants, also holds for Existenz philosophy. Except that there is no accident that the word "Being" is replaced by the word "Existenz." In this terminological change one of the fundamental problems of modern philosophy is, in fact, concealed.

Hegel's philosophy, which with a completeness never attained before, had explained and organized into a weirdly coherent whole all natural and historical phenomena, was truly "the owl of Minerva, that takes flight only in the evening." This system, immediately after Hegel's death, appeared to be the last word in the whole of western philosophy, in so far as western philosophy—despite all its variety and apparent contradictions— since Parmenides had not dared to doubt that: *to gar auto esti noein te kai einai,* being and thought are identical. What came after Hegel was either derivative, or it was a rebellion of the philosophers against philosophy in general, rebellion against or doubt of this identity.

This derivative character is peculiar to all the so-called schools of modern philosophy. They all seek to re-establish the unity of thought and being; whether they aim at this harmony in making matter (the materialists) or mind (the Idealists) dominant, is indif-

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ferent; indifferent also whether by playing with the notion of aspects they seek to establish a whole more spinozistic in character.

The Phenomenological Attempt at Reconstruction

Among the derivative philosophical currents of the last hundred years the most modern and interesting are pragmatism and phenomenology. Phenomenology, above all, has exercised an influence on contemporary philosophy which is neither accidental nor due only to its method. Husserl sought to reestablish the ancient relation between Being and Thought, which had guaranteed man a home in this world, by a detour through the intentional structure of consciousness. Since every act of consciousness has by its very nature an object, I can at least be certain of one thing, namely that I "have" the object of my consciousness. Thereby the question of reality, altogether abstracted from the essence of things, can be "bracketed"; I have all Being as that which I am conscious of and as consciousness I am, in the manner of man, the Being of the world. (The *seen* tree, the tree as object of my consciousness, need not be the "real" tree, it is in any case the real object of my consciousness.)

The modern feeling of homelessness in the world has always ended up with things torn out of their functional context. A proof of this, scarcely to be overlooked, is modern literature and a good part of modern painting. However one may interpret this homelessness sociologically or psychologically, its philosophical basis lies in the fact that though the functional context of the world, in which also I myself am involved, can always justify and explain that there are, for example, tables and chairs generally, nevertheless it can never make me grasp conceptually that *this* table *is*. And it is the existence of *this* table, independent of tables in general, which evokes the philosophical shock.

Phenomenology appeared to master this problem, which is much more than merely theoretical. In its description of consciousness it grasped precisely these isolated things torn out of their functional context as the contents of arbitrary acts of consciousness and appeared to connect these up again with man through the "stream of consciousness." Indeed Husserl maintained that by this detour through consciousness and by starting from a complete grasp of all the factual contents of consciousness (a new *mathesis universalis*), he would be able to rebuild the world which had fallen to pieces.

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Such a reconstruction of the world from consciousness would equal a second creation, since in this reconstruction its contingent character, which is at the same time its character as reality, would be removed from the world, which would thus no longer appear as something given to man but as something created by him.

In this fundamental claim of phenomenology lies the most properly permanent and most modern attempt to find a new foundation for humanism. Hofmannsthal's famous farewell letter to Stefan George, in which he espouses "the little things" against big words, since precisely in these small things the secret of reality lies hidden, is most intimately bound up with the feeling of life from which phenomenology has arisen. Husserl and Hofmannsthal are equally classicists, if classicism is the attempt—through an imitation, consistent to the end, of the classic, founded upon man's being at home in the world—to evoke magically a home again out of the world which has become alien. Husserl's "to the things themselves" is no less a magic formula than Hofmannsthal's "little things." If one could still achieve something with magic—in an age whose only good is that it has forsworn all magic—then one would surely have to begin with the littlest and apparently most modest things, with homely "little things," with homely words.

It was due to this magical homeliness that Husserl's analysis of consciousness (which Jaspers, since he inclined neither to magic nor to classicism, found unimportant for philosophy) decisively influenced both Heidegger and Scheler in their youth, although Husserl was able to contribute little of its concrete content to Existenz philosophy. Contrary to the widespread opinion that Husserl's influence was only methodologically important, the fact is that he freed modern philosophy, to which he himself did not properly belong, from the fetters of historicism. Following Hegel and under the influence of an extraordinarily intensified interest in history, philosophy threatened to degenerate into speculation as to whether the historical flux exhibited possible laws or not. Here it is not relevant whether such speculations were optimistically or pessimistically colored, whether they sought to reckon progress as unavoidable or decline as predestined. The essential thing was that in both cases Man, in Herder's words, was like the ant that only crawls on the wheel of destiny. Husserl's insistence on "the things themselves," which eliminates such empty speculation and goes on to separate the phenomenally given content of a process from its genesis, had a liberating influence in that Man himself, and not the historical or natural or biological or psychological flux into

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which he is sucked, could once again become a theme of philosophy.

This separation has become much more important than Husserl's positive philosophy, in which he seeks to make us tranquil about a fact over which modern philosophy cannot become tranquil—that man is compelled to assent to a Being which he has never created and to which he is essentially alien. With the transformation of alien Being into consciousness he seeks to make the world again human, as Hofmannsthal with the magic of little things sought to awaken in us again the old fondness for the world. But what this modern humanism, this good will towards the modest and homely, is always *wrecked* upon is the equally modern *hubris* which lies at its basis and which furtively (in Hofmannsthal) or openly and naively (in Husserl) hopes, in this inconspicuous way, to become what man cannot be, creator of the world and of himself.

In opposition to the arrogant modesty of Husserl the modern philosophy which is underivative seeks along many paths to come to terms with the fact that man is not the creator of the world. Towards this end it searches further and further in the direction where it shows its best inclinations, to place man in the position where Schelling, in a moment of self-misunderstanding, placed God—in the position of "Master of Being."

Kant's Demolition of the Old World and Schelling's Cry for a New One

The word "Existenz" in the modern sense appears, to my knowledge, for the first time in the later Schelling. Schelling knew exactly what he was rebelling against when over against "negative philosophy," against the philosophy of pure thought, he placed "positive philosophy," which proceeds from Existenz, which it has only as the pure *"That."*

He knew that with this the philosopher said goodbye to the "contemplative life"; knew that it is the I AM, "which has given the signal for the revolution" of pure thought, no longer able "to explain the contingency and actuality of things," is overcome by "final despair." All modern irrationalism, all the modern hostility to mind and reason, has its basis in this despair.

With the knowledge that the What can never explain the That, modern philosophy begins with a dreadful collision against bare reality. The more one empties Reality of all qualities, the more im-

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mediately and nakedly appears the one thing that from now on is to be the only interesting one—*That* it is. Hence, this philosophy from its start glorifies contingency, since there Reality falls directly upon Man as altogether incalculable, unthinkable, and unforeseen. Hence the enumeration of the philosophical "extreme situations" (Jaspers), which means the situations in which Man is driven to philosophize, such as death, guilt, fate, chance, since in all these experiences Reality shows itself as something that cannot be evaded, cannot be resolved by thought. In these situations Man arrives at the consciousness that he is dependent—not upon some individual thing and not even upon some general character of Limitation,—but dependent on the fact that he *is*.

Therefore too, since essence obviously has nothing more to do with existence, modern philosophy turns away from the sciences, which investigate the *What* of things. As Kierkegaard would put it, the objective truth of science is indifferent since it is neutral to the question of Existenz, and the subjective truth of the "existing individual" is a paradox, since it can never be objective, never universally valid. Since Being and thought are no longer identical, since through thought I can no longer enter into the proper reality of things, since the nature of things has nothing to do with their reality, then science may be whatever it happens to be—in any case it no longer yields truth for man to possess, no truth that interests man. This turning away from science has often been misunderstood, especially because of Kierkegaard's example, as an attitude stemming from Christianity. To this philosophy, passionately intent upon Reality, it's no concern that, in view of another and truer world, occupation with the things of this world distracts one from salvation of the soul (as *curiositas* or *dispersio*). What this philosophy wishes is *this* world, *this* world completely, which has lost precisely only its character as Reality.

The unity of Being and thought presupposed the pre-established coincidence of essence and existence, that, namely, everything thinkable also exists and every existent, because it is knowable, must also be rational. This unity was destroyed by Kant, the true, if also clandestine, founder of the new philosophy: who has likewise remained till the present time its secret king. Kant's proof of the antinomy-structure of Reason, and his analysis of synthetic propositions which proves that in every proposition in which something is asserted about Reality we go beyond the concept (the *essentia*) of a given thing—had already robbed man of the ancient security in Being. Even Christianity had not attacked this security, but only reinterpreted it within

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"God's plan of salvation." Now, however, one could be sure neither of the meaning or Being of the Christian world, nor of the always present Being of the ancient Cosmos; and even the traditional definition of truth as *aequatio intellectus et rei* was no longer valid.

Already before Kant's revolutionising of the western conception of Being, Descartes had posed the question of Reality in a very modern sense, although he then gave an answer which was completely bound up with the traditional sense. The question whether Being, in general, *is,* is just as modern as the answer of the *cogito ergo sum* is useless; since this answer proves, as Nietzsche remarked, never the existence of the ego cogitans (the thinking ego), but at most the existence of the cogitare (the act of thought). In other words, the truly living "I" never arises from the I-think, but only an "I" as object of thought. We know this precisely from the time of Kant.

More depends than is commonly supposed in the history of secularization on Kant's destruction of the ancient unity of thought and Being. Kant's refutation of the ontological proof of God destroyed that rational belief in God which rested on the notion that what I can rationally conceive must also be; a notion which is not only older than Christianity, but probably also much more strongly rooted in European man since the Renaissance. This so-called atheising of the world—the knowledge, namely, that we cannot prove God through reason—touches the ancient philosophical concepts at least as much as the Christian religion. In this atheised world man can be interpreted in his "abandonment" or in his "individual autonomy." For every modern philosopher—and not only for Nietzsche—this interpretation becomes a touchstone of his philosophy.

Hegel was for us the last ancient philosopher, since he was the last to sneak past this question successfully. With Schelling modern philosophy begins, since he clearly explains that he is concerned with the individual who "wishes to have a providential God" who "is Master of Being,"—whereby Schelling really intends the real man, the "individual freed of everything universal"; since "it is not the universal in man that longs after happiness, but the individual." In this astonishing directness of the individual's claim for happiness (after Kant's contempt for the ancient will to be happy it was not at all so simple to admit it again) there lies more than the desperate wish to return to the security of a Providence. What Kant hadn't understood, when he destroyed the ancient conception of Being, was that he was at the same time putting in question the Reality of everything beyond the individual; that, indeed, he implied what Schelling now directly

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says: "There exists nothing universal but only the individual, and the universal being exists only if it *is* the *absolute individual.*"

With this position, which resulted immediately from Kant, the absolute and rationally conceivable kingdom of Ideas and universal values was at one stroke lopped off; and Man was placed in the middle of a world where he could no longer rely on anything, neither on his Reason, which clearly could not arrive at a knowledge of Being, nor on the Ideals of his Reason, whose existence was not provable, nor on the universal, since this existed only as he himself.

From now on the word "existing" is used always in opposition to that which is only thought of, only contemplated; as the concrete in opposition to the mere abstract; as the individual in contrast to the mere universal. Which means nothing more nor less than that philosophy, which since Plato has thought only in concepts, has now become mistrustful of the concept itself. Henceforth, philosophers never get rid of their bad conscience, so to speak, in the pursuit of philosophy.

Kant's destruction of the ancient conception of Being had as its purpose the establishing of the *autonomy* of man, what he himself called the dignity of man. He is the first philosopher who wishes to understand Man according to his own law, and who frees man from the universal context of Being, in which Man would be a thing among things (even if as *res cogitans* he is opposed to *res extensa*). In Lessing's sense, Man's coming of age is here established in thought, and it is no accident that this philosophic clarification of Man's coming of age coincides with the French Revolution. Kant is truly *the* philosopher of the French Revolution. As it was decisive for the development of the nineteenth century that nothing be quicker demolished than the new revolutionary concept of the *citoyen,* so was it decisive for the development of post-Kantian philosophy that nothing be quicker demolished than this new concept of Man, here for the first time developed in germ. Neither was an accident.

Kant's destruction of the ancient conception of Being accomplished only half the job. He destroyed the old identity of Being and thought and with it the notion of the pre-established harmony between Man and the world. What he did not destroy, but implicitly held on to, was the concept, equally old and intimately associated, of Being as the given, to whose laws Man is in all cases subject. Man could suffer this notion only so long as he had, in the feeling of his security in Being and his belonging to the world, at least the certainty that he could know Being and the course of the

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World. On it rested the ancient world's and the whole western world's conception of fate up to the nineteenth century (which means till the appearance of the novel); without this pride, tragedy as well as western philosophy would have been impossible. Likewise, Christianity had never denied that Man has an insight into God's plan of salvation; whether this insight be due to his own godlike reason or to God's revelation, is indifferent. In any case, he remained initiated into the secrets of the cosmos and the course of the world.

What holds for Kant's destruction of the ancient notion of Being, holds in stronger measure for his new concept of Man's freedom —a concept in which, oddly enough, the modern lack of freedom is indicated. According to Kant, Man has the possibility of determining his own actions out of the freedom of the good will; these actions themselves, however, fall under the causality of nature, a sphere essentially alien to Man. As soon as human action leaves subjectivity, which is freedom, it enters the objective sphere, which is causality, and loses its character as freedom. Man, free in himself, is hopelessly surrendered to the course of nature alien to him, a fate contrary to him, destructive of his freedom. Herein is expressed the contradictory structure of his human reality, so far as this plays its rôle in the world. While Kant made Man the master and measure of Man, at the same time he lowered him to a slave of Being. Every new philosopher since Schelling has protested against this devaluation. Modern philosophy is still occupied with this reduction of Man, who has just come of age. It is as if Man had never before risen so high and fallen so low.

Since Kant, every philosophy maintains an element of defiance, on the one hand, and an open or concealed concept of fate, on the other hand. Even Marx—who nevertheless, as he himself explained, wished no longer to interpret the world but to change it, and therefore stood on the crest of a new concept of Being and the World, in which Being and the World are no longer recognized as only given, but as a possible product of Man—quickly fled back to the old security when he agreed with Hegel that freedom is insight into necessity. Nietzsche's *amor fati,* Heidegger's Resoluteness, Camus's Defiance which would risk living despite the absurdity of the human condition, which consists in the homelessness of Man in the world,—are nothing else but this effort to save themselves by a return to security. The hero's gesture has not accidentally become *the* pose of philosophy since Nietzsche; it requires heroism to live in the world as Kant left it. Recent philosophers with their modern pose of the hero show only too plainly that they could follow Kant to the end in

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many directions, but not a step beyond him, if in fact they have not fallen, consistently and desperately, a few steps behind him. For they all, with the one great exception of Jaspers, have given up at some point Kant's basic conception of freedom and dignity. When Schelling desired to "have" the "real Master of Being," he wished again to participate in the movement of the world, from which, since Kant, the free man had been excluded. Schelling flees again to a philosophic God, precisely because he accepts from Kant "the fact of decline," without, however, making use of Kant's extraordinary calmness in simply coming to terms with it. For Kant's tranquillity, which seems so imposing to us, is in the end due only to the fact that he was strongly rooted in the tradition that philosophy is essentially identical with contemplation—a tradition which Kant himself unconsciously destroyed. Schelling's "positive philosophy" seeks refuge in God, in order that he "may oppose the fact of *defection,*" in order that he may bring Man—who, as soon as he found freedom, lost his Reality—to a Reality.

The reason why Schelling is usually overlooked in discussions of Existenz philosophy is that no philosopher has taken his path towards the solution of Kant's difficulties concerning subjective freedom and objective necessity. Instead of a "positive philosophy" they sought (with the exception of Nietzsche) to reinterpret Man, in order that he might enter again into this world that robs him of value; his failure was to belong to his Being and not merely to be his fate, was to be due not to a nature hostile to him, because it was completely determined by causal law, but was already to be traced in his own nature. Hence Kant's concepts of human freedom and dignity, as well as of humanity, as the regulative principle of all political action, were abandoned and there arose that distinctive melancholy which, since Kierkegaard, has been the hallmark of all except the most superficial philosophy. It always appeared more attractive to be subjected to "decline" as an inner law of human Existenz, rather than to meet one's fall through the alien, causally organized world. The first of these philosophers is Kierkegaard.

The Birth of the Self: Kierkegaard

Modern Existenz philosophy begins with Kierkegaard. There are no Existenz philosophers on whom his influence would not be traceable. Kierkegaard himself sets out consciously from a critique of

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Hegel (and, one might add, the unmentioned influence of Schelling, whose later philosophy he knew from lectures). To the Hegelian system, which pretended to grasp and explain the "whole," he opposed the "single person," the individual man, for whom neither place nor meaning was left in the Whole directed by the World-Mind. In other words, Kierkegaard starts from the forlornness of the individual in the completely explained world. The individual finds himself in permanent contradiction to this explained world, since his "Existenz," namely the pure factual character of his existing in all its contingency (that, precisely, I am *I* and no one else, and that, precisely, I *am* rather than am not), can be neither foreseen by reason nor resolved into something purely thinkable.

But this Existenz, which I am continually but momentarily, and which I cannot grasp by Reason, is the only thing of which I can be unquestionably certain. Thus, man's task is to "become subjective," a consciously existing being, who perpetually realizes the paradoxical implications of his life in the world. All essential questions of philosophy—as, say, the immortality of the soul, human freedom, the unity of the world, which means all the questions whose contradictory structure Kant had shown in his antinomies of pure Reason—are to be grasped only as "subjective truths," not to be known as objective truths. The example of an "existing" philosopher is Socrates with his "If there is immortality." "Was he thus a doubter?" Kierkegaard begins one of the greatest interpretations in all his works which are so rich in interpretations. "Not at all. On this 'if' he stakes his whole life, he dares to die—the Socratic uncertainty was thus the expression of the fact that the eternal truth is related to an existing individual, and hence must remain a paradox to him so long as he exists."

Thus the universal, with which philosophy has so long been occupied in the task of pure knowledge, is to be brought into a real relation with Man. This relation can only be paradoxical insofar as Man is always an individual. In the paradox the individual can grasp the universal, make it the content of his Existenz, and thereby lead that paradoxical life, which Kierkegaard reports about himself. In the paradoxical life Man seeks to realize the contradiction that "the universal is staked as the individual" if it is to become at all real and meaningful for Man. Kierkegaard therefore interprets such a life later in the category of "exception,"—an exception, namely, from the universal average everyday human existence; an exception on which man decides only because God has called him to it in order to establish an example of how the paradox of man's life in the world is posed.

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In the exception man realizes the universal structure of human reality. It is characteristic of all of Existenz philosophy, that by "existential" it fundamentally understands what Kierkegaard had presented in the category of the Exception. The existential attitude turns about the realizing (in opposition to that which is only contemplated) of the most universal structures of life.

The passion to become subjective flares up in Kierkegaard with the realized anxiety before death as the event in which I alone am guaranteed as an individual, separated from average everyday life. The thought of death becomes an action, since in it man makes himself subjective, withdraws from the world and from everyday life with other men. Psychologically, this inner technique of reflection has simply as its basis the supposition that with the thought that I shall no longer be, my interest in what is must also be extinguished. On this presupposition rests not only modern "Inwardness," but also the fanatical resoluteness, which enters likewise in Kierkegaard, to seize earnestly the moment,—since only in the moment is Existenz, namely Reality, guaranteed.

This new earnestness towards life, which recoils from death, did not at all imply necessarily a Yea to life or to the human reality of man as such. In fact, only Nietzsche and, following him, Jaspers, have made such a Yea the groundwork of their philosophy; and this is also the reason why a positive way leads from their philosophical investigations to philosophy. Kierkegaard, and Heidegger after him, have always interpreted death as the peculiar "objection" against the Being of Man, as proof of his nothingness—in which, possibly, Heidegger's analysis of death and the character of human life bound up with it surpasses that of Kierkegaard in cogency and precision. The new French school, especially Camus and Sartre, if they have not thought out Heidegger's results to the end, have at least perceived what the end is, and have consequently arrived at a philosophy, which has scarcely a place for the anxiety before death, since it is so full of nausea towards life,—as it were, overcome by the sheer *That* of Being. "Quelle saleté, quelle saleté," Sartre cries out (in *La Nausée*), as he discovers that he cannot think the Nothing, since everything, absolutely everything "exists," has reality.

It is clear that Kierkegaard's peculiar inner activity, his "becoming subjective," immediately leads us out of philosophy. It goes with philosophy only in so far as philosophic grounds for the philosopher's revolt against philosophy must be found. Similarly, though at the

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directly opposite pole, lies the case of Marx, who likewise explained philosophically that man can change the world and hence should cease to interpret it. Common to both was the fact that they immediately wished to arrive at activity and did not get the idea of beginning philosophy on a new basis after they had once begun to doubt the prerogatives of contemplation and to despair of the possibility of a purely contemplative knowledge. The result was that Kierkegaard took refuge in psychology in the description of inner activity, Marx in political science in the description of external activity. With the difference, to be sure, that Marx again accepted the certainty of Hegelian philosophy, which his "turning it on its head" changed less than he supposed. It was not so decisive for philosophy that Hegel's principle of mind was replaced by Marx's principle of matter, as that the unity of man and the world was restored in a doctrinaire, purely hypothetical manner—hence, one not convincing to modern man.

Since Kierkegaard held fast to his despair with philosophy, he has become so much the more important for the later development of philosophy. Philosophy has taken over from him all its new concrete contents. These are, essentially, the following: *Death* as guarantee of the *principium individuationis,* since death, as the most common of occurrences, nevertheless strikes me unavoidably alone. *Contingency* as guarantee of reality as only given, which overwhelms and persuades me precisely through its incalculability and irreducibility to thought. *Guilt* as the category of all human activity, which is wrecked not upon the world but upon itself, insofar as I always take responsibilities upon myself which I cannot overlook, and am compelled through my decisions themselves to neglect other activity. Guilt is thus the mode and the manner in which I myself become real, plunge into reality.

In full explicitness these new contents of philosophy appear for the first time in Jaspers' *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen* as "Extreme situations" (*Grenzsituationen*), in which Man is placed because of the contradictory structure of his human reality and which give him his proper impulse to philosophize. Jaspers himself seeks to found a new kind of philosophy on the basis of these situations, and he adds to the content he has taken over from Kierkegaard something further, which he now calls struggle, now love, but which later becomes, in his theory of communication, the new form of philosophic intelligence. As opposed to Jaspers, Heidegger seeks with the new content to revive Systematic Philosophy in the completely traditional sense.

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The Self as All and Nothing: Heidegger

Heidegger's attempt, despite and against Kant, to re-establish an ontology led to a far-reaching alteration of the traditional philosophical terminology. For this reason Heidegger always appears on first glance more revolutionary than Jaspers, and this terminological appearance has very much interfered with the correct estimate of his philosophy. He says explicitly that he wishes to found an ontology, and he can have nothing else in mind than to undo the destruction, begun with Kant, of the ancient concept of Being. One cannot escape taking this seriously even if one should arrive at the knowledge that on the basis of this content, which arises from the revolt against philosophy, no ontology in the traditional sense can be re-established.* Heidegger has not really established his ontology, since the second volume of *Sein und Zeit* has never appeared. To the question concerning the meaning of Being he has given the provisional answer, in itself unintelligible, that the meaning of Being is temporality. With this he implied , and with his analysis of human reality (i.e., of the Being of Man), which is conditioned by death, he established that the meaning of Being is nothingness. Thus Heidegger's attempt to find a new foundation for metaphysics ends consistently not with the second promised volume, which was to determine the meaning of Being generally on the basis of the analysis of human Being, but with a small brochure *What is Metaphysics?,* in which it is quite consistently shown, despite all tricks and sophistries of speech, that Being in the Heideggerian sense is the Nothing.

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* Another question worth discussing is whether Heidegger's philosophy has not generally been taken too seriously, simply because it deals with the most serious things. In any case, Heidegger has done everything to warn us that we should take him seriously. As is well known, he entered the Nazi Party in a very sensational way in 1933—an act which made him stand out pretty much by himself among colleagues of the same calibre. Further, in his capacity as Rector of Freiburg University, he forbade Husserl, his teacher and friend, whose lecture chair he had inherited, to enter the faculty, because Husserl was a Jew. Finally, it has been rumored that he has placed himself at the disposal of the French occupational authorities for the re-education of the German people.

In view of the real comedy of this development, and of the no less real low level of political thought in German universities, one is naturally inclined not to bother with the whole story. On the other hand, there is the point that this whole mode of behavior has exact parallels in German Romanticism, so that one can scarcely believe the coincidence is accidental. Heidegger is, in fact, the last (we hope) romantic—as it were, a tremendously gifted Friedrich Schlegel or Adam Mueller, whose complete irresponsibility was attributed partly to the delusion of genius, partly to desperation.

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The peculiar fascination, which the thought of the Nothing has exercised on modern philosophy, is not simply characteristic of Nihilism. If we look at the problem of the Nothing in our context of a philosophy revolting against philosophy as pure contemplation, then we see it as an effort to become "Master of Being" and thereby to question philosophically in such a manner that we progress immediately to the deed; thus the thought that Being is really the Nothing has a tremendous advantage. Basing himself on this, Man can imagine himself, can relate himself to Being that is given, no less than the Creator before the creation of the world, which, as we know, was created out of nothing. In the characterizing of Being as Nothing there is, finally, the attempt to get away from the definition of Being as the given, and to transform the activities of Man from being godlike to being divine. This is also the real reason why in Heidegger the Nothing suddenly becomes active and begins to "nothing." The Nothing tries, so to speak, to reduce to nothing the given-ness of Being, and to put itself in Being's place. If Being, which I have not created, is the occasion of a nature which I am not and do not know, then perhaps the Nothing is the really free domain of Man. Since I am not a world-creating being, perhaps my nature is to be a world-destroying being. (These conclusions are now quite freely and clearly developed in Camus and Sartre.) This, in any case, is the philosophical basis for modern Nihilism, its origin in the old ontology; the attempt to stretch the new questions and content to the old framework here takes its revenge.

But whatever the point of departure of Heidegger's attempt, its great advantage was that it took up directly the questions which Kant had interrupted and which nobody after him had broached. Amid the ruins of the ancient pre-established harmony of Being and thought, of essence and existence, of the existing being and the What of the existing being conceivable through reason,—Heidegger maintains that he has found a being, in whom essence and existence are immediately identical, and this is Man. His essence is his existence. "The substance of Man is not mind . . . but Existenz." Man has no substance, the important thing is *that* he is; one cannot ask after Man's What as after the What of a thing, but only after his Who. Man as the identity of Existenz and essence appeared to give a new key to the question concerning Being in general. One need only recall that for traditional metaphysics God was the being in whom essence and existence coincided, in whom thought and activity were identical, and who was therefore interpreted as the otherworldly

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ground for all this world's Being,—in order to understand how seductive this scheme was. It was, in fact, the attempt to make Man directly the "Master of Being."

The Being of Man Heidegger calls Existenz or *Dasein.* Through establishing this terminology, he gets away from using the expression "Man." This is not arbitrary terminology, its purpose is to resolve Man into a series of modes of Being which are phenomenologically demonstrable. Hence he discards all those characteristics of Man which Kant had provisionally sketched as freedom, human dignity, and Reason; and which arise from the spontaneity of Man and hence are not phenomenologically demonstrable, since, being spontaneous, they are more than mere functions of Being, and since in them Man intends more than himself. Heidegger's ontological approach hides a rigid functionalism in which Man appears only as a conglomerate of modes of Being, which is in principle arbitrary, since no concept of Man determines the modes of his Being.

The "Self" has entered in place of Man: "With the expression Self we answer the question concerning the Who of human reality." For human reality (the Being of Man) is singled out by the fact that "in its very Being it is concerned with its Being." This self-reflexive character of human reality can be "existentially" grasped; which is all that remains of Man's power and freedom.

This grasping of one's own Existenz is, according to Heidegger, the act of philosophising itself: "philosophical questioning must be existentially seized as a possibility inherent in the Being of existing human reality." Philosophy is the exceptional existential possibility of human reality—which is, in the end, only a reformulation of Aristotle's *Bios Theoretikos,* of the contemplative life as the highest possibility for man. This is all the more intensified by the fact that in Heidegger's philosophy Man is made a kind of *summum ens,* the "Master of Being," insofar as existence and essence are identical in him. After Man was discovered as the being for whom he had so long taken God, it appears that such a being is also, in fact, powerless, and that there is no "Master of Being." The only things that remain are anarchical modes of Being.

Human reality is thus characterized by the fact not that it simply *is,* but that its very Being is to put its own Being at stake. This fundamental structure is "Care," which lies at the basis of all our everyday carefulness in the world. Carefulness, taking care, has truly a self-reflexive character; it is only apparently directed towards the object with which it is occupied.

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The Being, for which human reality is care-ridden, is "Existenz," which, perpetually threatened by death, is condemned in the end to extinction. Human reality stands continuously in relation to Existenz thus menaced; and from this point of view all attitudes are to be understood, and the analysis of Man coherently made. The structures of Man's Existenz, namely the structures of his That, Heidegger calls *existential,* and their structural interrelatedness *existentiality.* The individual possibility of grasping these existential structures and thereby of *existing* in an explicit sense, Heidegger calls *existentiele.* In this concept of the existential, the question, never put to rest since Schelling and Kierkegaard, how the universal can *be,* comes out into the open, together with the answer which had already been given by Kierkegaard.

Seen from the point of view of Nietzsche, who had always nobly tried to make Man a real "Master of Being," Heidegger's philosophy is the first absolutely and uncompromisingly this-worldly philosophy. Man's Being is characterized as Being-in-the-world, and what is at stake for this Being in the world is, finally, nothing else than to maintain himself in the world. Precisely this is not given him; hence the fundamental character of Being-in-the-world is uneasiness in the double meaning of homelessness and fearfulness. In anxiety, which is fundamentally anxiety before death, the not-being-at-home in the world becomes explicit ."Being-in-the-world appears in the existentiel mode of not-being-at-home." This is uneasiness.

Human reality would be truly itself only if it could withdraw from this Being-in-the-world to itself; which it essentially never can do, hence is always essentially a decline, a falling away, from itself. "Human reality always falls away from itself as a real unity—declines into the 'world'." Only in the realization of death, which will take him away from the world, has Man the certainty of being himself.

By bringing back reality to the Self without the detour through Man, the question concerning the meaning of Being has fundamentally been given up, and replaced by the question, obviously more basic to this philosophy, concerning the meaning of the Self. But this question appears, in fact, unanswerable, since a Self taken in its absolute isolation is meaningless; if not isolated, on the other hand, it becomes (sunk to the everyday life of the public individual) no longer a Self. Heidegger arrives at this ideal of the Self as a consequence of his making Man what God was in the earlier ontology. Such a highest being is, in fact, possible only as a unique individual being who knows

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no equals. What, consequently, appears as "Fall" in Heidegger, are all those modes of human existence which rest on the fact that Man lives together in the world with his fellows. To put it historically, Heidegger's Self is an ideal which has been working mischief in German philosophy and literature since Romanticism. In Heidegger this arrogant passion to will to be a Self has contradicted itself; for never before was it so clear as in his philosophy that this is probably the one being which Man cannot be.

Within the framework of this philosophy the Self "falls" in the following way: as Being-in-the-world Man has not made himself, but has been "thrown" into this his Being. He seeks to escape from the condition of being thrown through the "project" which always anticipates death as his most extreme possibility. But "in the structure of being-thrown (*Geworfenheit*) as in the project there lies essentially a Nothingness": Man has not contrived to bring himself to be and he usually does not contrive to escape from being. (Suicide plays no role in Heidegger; Camus, in maintaining *"Il n'y a qu'un problème philosophique vraiment sérieux: c'est le suicide,"* is the first to draw from this position a consequence which is contrary to Heidegger, since the latter does not leave Man even the freedom of suicide.) In other words, the character of Man's Being is essentially determined by what he is *not*, his nothingness. The only thing the Self can do to become a Self is to take upon itself "resolutely" this factual character of its Being, so that in its Existenz it *"is* the void (*nichtige*) ground of its nothingness."

In the "resoluteness" to become what Man on the basis of his nothingness cannot be, namely a Self, Man recognizes that "human reality *as such* is guilty." The Being of Man is such that, perpetually falling to the world, it perpetually hears the "Cry of conscience from the ground of its Being." Existentially, living means therefore: "The Will-to-have-conscience resolves to be guilty."

The most essential characteristic of this Self is its absolute egoism, its radical separation from all its fellows. The anticipation of death as existential was introduced to achieve this; for in death Man realizes the absolute *principium individuationis*. Death alone tears him from the context of his fellows, within which he becomes a public person and is hindered from being a Self. Death may indeed be the end of human reality; at the same time it is the guarantee that nothing matters but myself. With the experience of death as nothingness I have the chance of devoting myself exclusively to being a Self, and once and for all freeing myself from the surrounding world.

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In this absolute isolation, the Self emerges as the concept really contrary to Man. If, namely, since Kant the nature of Man consisted in the fact that every individual man represents humanity; and if since the French Revolution and the rationalizing of human law it belonged to the concept of Man that in every single individual humanity can be debased or exalted; then the Self is the concept of Man according to which he can exist independently of humanity and need represent no one but himself—his own nothingness. As the Categorical Imperative in Kant asserted that every action must assume responsibility for all humanity, so the experience of guilty nothingness would precisely eliminate the presence of humanity in every man. The Self as conscience has put itself in place of humanity, and the Being of the Self in place of the Being of Man.

Heidegger has therefore attempted in later lectures to bring in, by way of afterthought, such mythologizing confusions as Folk and Earth as a social foundation for his isolated Selves. It is evident that such conceptions can lead one only out of philosophy into some naturalistic superstition. If it is not part of the concept of Man that he inhabits the world with his fellows, then there remains only a mechanical reconciliation by which the atomised Self is given a substratum essentially discordant with its own concept. This can only serve to organize the Selves engaged in willing themselves into an Over-self, in order to make a transition from the fundamental guilt, grasped through resoluteness, to action.

Indications of Human Existenz: Jaspers

From an historical point of view, it would have been more correct to have begun the discussion of contemporary Existenz philosophy with Jaspers. The *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen,* first printed in 1919, is undoubtedly the first book of the new "school." On the other hand, there was not only the external circumstance that Jaspers' big *Philosophie* (in three volumes) appeared some five years after *Sein und Zeit,* but also, more significantly, the fact that Jaspers' philosophy is not really closed and is at the same time more modern. By modern we mean no more than that it immediately yields more clues for contemporary philosophical thinking. There are such clues, naturally, also in Heidegger; but they have the peculiarity that they can lead either only to clues for polemic or to the occasion of a radicalization of Heidegger's project—as in contemporary French

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philosophy. In other words, either Heidegger has said his last word on the condition of contemporary philosophy or he will have to break with his own philosophy. While Jaspers belongs without any such break to contemporary philosophy, and will develop and decisively intervene in its discussion.

Jaspers achieved his break with the traditional philosophy in his *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen,* where he represents and relativizes all philosophical systems as mythologizing structures, in which Man, seeking protection, flees before the real questions of his Existenz. A Weltanschauung which pretends to have grasped the meaning of Being, systems as "formulated doctrines of the Whole," are for Jaspers only shells which "drain the experience of extreme situations" and confer a peace of mind which is fundamentally unphilosophical. From these extreme situations he seeks to project a new type of philosophising, in which he invokes Kierkegaard and Nietzsche; this new philosophizing will, above all, teach nothing; it will be, rather, a "perpetual shaking up, a perpetual *appeal* (my italics) to the powers of life in oneself and others." In this manner Jaspers places himself in the revolt, fundamental to the new philosophy, of the philosophers against philosophy. He seeks to dissolve philosophy in philosophizing and to find ways in which philosophical "results" can be so communicated that they lose their character as results.

One of the principal problems of this philosophy becomes therefore the question of communicability generally. Communication is the extraordinary form of philosophic intelligence; at the same time it goes along with philosophizing, in which there is no question of results but of the "Illumination of Existenz." The affinity of this method to the Socratic maieutic is evident; except that what Socrates calls maieutic, Jaspers calls appeal. This difference in stress is again no accident. Jaspers searches, in fact, with the Socratic method, but by removing its pedagogical character. In Jaspers, as in Socrates, there does not exist *the* philosopher, who (since Aristotle) has led an Existenz singled out from other men. Nor with him does the Socratic priority of the questioner exist; for in communication the philosopher moves among his fellows, to whom he appeals as they in turn can appeal to him. Thereby philosophy has left the sphere of the sciences and specializations, the philosopher has deprived himself of every specialized prerogative.

In so far as Jaspers communicates "results," he puts them in the form of "playful metaphysics," in the form of a perpetually experimenting, never fixed representation of definite movements of

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thought, which have at the same time the character of proposals that men can be brought to work with—namely, to philosophize with.

Existenz is for Jaspers no form of Being, but a form of human freedom and indeed the form in which "Man as possibility of his spontaneity turns against his mere Being-a-result." Man's Being as such and as given is not Existenz, but "Man is in his human reality possible Existenz." Thus the word "Existenz" expresses the meaning that only in so far as Man moves in the freedom that rests upon his own spontaneity and is "directed in communication to the freedom of others," is there Reality for him.

Thus the question concerning the That of reality, which cannot be resolved into thought, acquires a new meaning without losing its character as real. The That of Being as the given—whether as the reality of the world, as the incalculability of one's fellow men, or the fact that I have not created myself—becomes the backdrop against which man's freedom emerges, becomes at the same time the stuff which kindles it. That I cannot resolve the real to the object of thought becomes the triumph of possible freedom. In this context the question concerning the meaning of Being can be so suspended that the answer to it runs: "Being is such that this human reality is possible."

We become aware of Being by a process of thought which proceeds from "the illusory world of the thinkable" to the limits of Reality, which is no longer to be grasped as pure object of thought or pure possibility. This bringing oneself in thought to the limits of the thinkable Jaspers calls *transcending;* and his "playful metaphysics" is an ordered enumeration of such movements of thought which transcend, overstep themselves. The decisive thing for these movements is that Man as "master of his thoughts" is more than anyone of these movements of thought, so that philosophising itself does not become a highest existential mode of Man's Being, but rather a preparation for the reality both of myself and the world. "Brought into suspense by passing beyond all knowledge of the world which would fix Being, philosophizing sounds the appeal to my freedom and creates the space for an unconditioned deed that would invoke transcendence." This "deed" arising out of extreme situations appears in the world through communication with others, who as my fellows and through the appeal to our common reason guaranteed the universal; through activity it carries out the freedom of Man in the world and becomes thereby "a seed, though perishing, of the creation of a world."

In Jaspers, thinking has the function of leading Man to determi-

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nate experience, in which thought itself (though not the thinking man) fails. In the foundering of thought (and not of the man) Man,—who is more than thought, because more real and more free—experiences what Jaspers calls "the cipher of transcendence." That transcendence is experienced as a cipher only in foundering, is itself a sign of Existenz, which "is aware not only that as human reality it has not created itself and that as human reality it is helplessly surrendered to inevitable destruction, but also that even as freedom it is not indebted to itself alone." That transcendence is experienced in failure is a sign of the limitation of human Existenz.

Jaspers' "failure" is not to be confused with what Heidegger called "Fall" or "Decline"; which latter Jaspers himself calls "Slipping away" (*Abgleiten*). In Jaspers this latter is described in many ways, *is psychologically explicable, but is not (as in Heidegger) a structurally necessary Fall* from one's authentic Being as a man. Jaspers holds that in philosophy every ontology claiming it can say what Being really is, is a Slipping-away into the absolutizing of particular categories of Being. The existentiel meaning of such Slipping-away would be that such a philosophy robs Man of a freedom which can persist only so long as Man does not know what Being really is.

Expressed formally, Being is transcendence and as such a "reality without transformation into possibility"; something which I can't represent to myself as not being—which, in principle, I can do for every individual thing that is. Through the fact that my thinking fails on the That of Reality, the "weight of Reality" first becomes felt. In this measure the failure of thought is the condition for Existenz, which as free always seeks to transcend the merely given world; the condition, namely, for the fact that Existenz, encountering this "weight of Reality" inserts itself into it and belongs to it in the only way in which Man can belong to it—in that he chooses it.

In this failure Man experiences the fact that he can neither know nor create Being and that thus he is not God. In this experience he realizes the limitation of his Existenz, the limits of which he tries to trace in philosophizing. In the failing transcendence of all limits he experiences Reality given to him as the cipher of a Being which he himself is not.

The task of philosophy is to free Man from "the illusory world of the pure object of thought" and "let him find his way home to Reality." Philosophic thought can never cancel the fact that Reality cannot be resolved into the thinkable; its job is rather "to aggravate . . . this unthinkability." This is all the more urgent in that the

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"reality of the thinker precedes his thought" and his real freedom alone decides what he thinks and what not.

The real content of Jaspers' philosophy is not to be summarized in the form of a report, since this content lies essentially in the ways and movements of his philosophizing. In this fashion Jaspers has come to all the fundamental problems of contemporary philosophy, without answering or settling any of them in a conclusive way. He has singled out for modern philosophy the ways it must travel if it is not to get stuck in the blind alley of a positivistic or nihilistic fanaticism.

The most important among these ways appear to be the following: Being as such is not knowable, it is to be experienced only as something "surrounding" us. Thus the very ancient search for an ontology is liquidated—a search which looked for Being in the existant, so to speak, as if for a magical all-pervasive substance, which makes present everything that is, and which appears in language in the little word "is." With the liberation of this world from the ghost of Being and the illusion of being able to understand it, there disappeared the necessity of having to explain it monistically from one principle—namely, from this all-pervasive substance. Instead of which, the "discordance of Being" (where this Being does not mean the Being of ontologies) can be admitted; and the modern feeling of alienation in the world can be taken into account, as well as the modern will to create a human world which can be a home within a world which is no longer a home. It is as if with this concept of Being as that which "surrounds" us in fluid contour there were traced an island, on which Man, unmenaced by the dark Unknowable, that in traditional philosophy pervades every existant like an additional quality—can freely rule and choose.

The limits of this island of human freedom are traced out in the "extreme situations," in which man experiences the limitations which immediately become the conditions of his freedom and the ground of his activity. Proceeding from them, he can "illuminate" his Existenz, trace out what he can and cannot do; and thereby from mere "Being as a result" pass to "Existenz"—which, in Jaspers, is only another, and more explicit, word for being a man.

Existenz itself is never essentially isolated; it exists only in communication and in the knowledge of the Existenz of others. One's fellow men are not (as in Heidegger) an element which, though structurally necessary, nevertheless destroys Existenz; but, on the contrary, Existenz can develop only in the togetherness of men in the common given world. In the concept of communication there lies

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embedded, though not fully developed, a new concept of humanity as the condition for man's Existenz. In any case, men move together within this "surrounding" Being; and they hunt neither the phantom of the Self nor do they live in the arrogant illusion that they can be Being generally.

Through the essentially human movement of transcendence through thought, and of the failure of thought bound up with this, we at least arrive at the conclusion that Man, as "Master of his thoughts," not only is more than any of his thoughts (and this would probably be the fundamental condition for a new definition of human dignity), but that from the first man's nature is to be more than himself and to will more than himself. With this, Existenz philosophy has left the period of its egoism.

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Reflections on Returning from Italy

WILLIAM BARRETT

The Army's Air Transport Command has made possible one of the most powerful experiences in comparative civilizations. You step into the C-54 at Naples, become semi-anaesthetized for a day and a half trying to forget the monotony of the upper air and the cramped plane quarters, are disgorged tiredly into an airport taxi and wake up at a midtown hotel inside the teeming cornucopia, New York. The absence of a long intervening voyage, during which all the nameless differences of immediacy have a chance to wear off, now makes it literally possible to go to sleep in one civilization and wake up in another.

Here suddenly are the different-looking people. With all the details of difference you can't put your finger on but which made it possible to spot an American in Europe even when not in uniform; and which, all around you now *en masse,* no longer leave any doubt that one is perceiving here a new type, the *American type,* into which the species is passing. And the first American women you see! how differently they walk, more stiffly (are they all wearing girdles?), aggressively, the mastresses (neither mistresses nor masters, the coinage is necessary) in a feminist society, but looking less satisfied by it. This city with its intact skyline has never been united into compact terror (a European form of existence) at the sound of real bombers with real bombs coming and going. A city without ruins now looks unreal, as if it had remained in a quiet backwater away from what had been happening in the world during these last years—become provincial, a little as a midwestern city used to strike us in comparison with New York. These faces and voices aren't haunted, have never cowered at even a possible bombing. Does one really see this as given, as there, or am I projecting? Or the hyperaesthesia of return? I don't know, but I've checked with other people; and the impression *was* overwhelming. Perhaps because the particular part of the New World I woke up in (by the grace of God and the accident of the hotel congestion) was midtown Fifth Avenue, in the middle of the women's shopping district: the antithesis of Europe, the horn of plenty, the immense department stores bursting with goods (the "shortages" I heard about later, but how laughably piddling they seemed after Europe), the swarms of suburbanwife shoppers absorbed

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in the religion of their purchases. Here before one's eyes was the meaning of Trotsky's summarizing phrase for World War I, become much truer now of World War II: "the victory of America over Europe." Only this time it's the victory of America and Russia over Europe, and maybe soon simply Russia's victory over Europe—with the witless aid of America.

At the first shock, I felt like crying in the middle of the street: "Long live Europe! Long live exhausted degraded Europe!"

(Ah, but instead, the instinctive fingers crept into the pocket to fondle gratefully and comfortably the American passport.)

2.

The ATC trip is also arranged with an unconscious and frightening suggestiveness: one no longer enters Italy through the Alps from Europe but across the desolate Arab world of North Africa. Casablanca, Algiers, Tunis—to Naples; the journey along the shores of the Mediterranean world places the whole peril for Italy at this moment among the right historical associations. My last day in Italy I spent in a small boat in Naples Bay, from which point, under the incredibly perfect light and weather, the city's squalor and filth disappear into the most beautiful vision-of-a-city in the world; and my mind, going over everything I had seen during my year in the peninsula, couldn't keep from crossing incessantly the blue water to the Arab world on the other shore. The ragged, economically depressed, inexpressibly debased Arabs, who look as if they've fallen out of humanity, had been a good preparation for the cities of Italy, which the Black Market has now transformed into the appearance of oriental bazaars. Are the Italians to follow the same historical curve? The people whom one must perpetually see through the eyes of Stendhal and hear with the vocal love of Joyce—will they sink from the energies of their past as completely as the Arabs, beyond any situation of history's challenge-response? Stendhal would still have seen signs of the Italian energy he loved: the *crimes passionels* in Italy during the last year would have intrigued him as flickers of the old "energia" of the past; but the nature of these crimes (usually stabbings of wives for prostituting themselves to the Allied soldiers; no attempt was made on the soldiers: it's assumed the male is a male and must seek his pleasure, but the wife was pledged) was in itself a dismal sign of the time and a decline from those *virginal* crimes which Stendhal records. "The only oriental city without a European quarter," the Englishman Lord Roseberry once described Naples with a somewhat heavy wit. But the juxtaposition with the world of the orientals and Arabs, and through them with the perished civilizations of the Mediterranean, is correct—more frighteningly correct now than when he said it. Com-

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paratively, Italy perhaps hasn't produced much this century, but its very presence (its people and its past alive in its people) has been a perpetual resource to Europe's culture, to the French, English, Germans,—and one great Irishman. And if Italy is to fall out of European civilization now,—well then, Europe itself is really through.

3.

I was already prepared in part for such violent shifts in civilization by my leaving Rome for the North of Italy about a month ago.

Entering Milan from Rome one enters the very climate of a different civilization: with its rain, mist, changeability, a city of Europe—like London, Paris, Copenhagen, Dublin, Berlin, cities of the macintosh and umbrella; and the Milanese show quite strikingly their difference from other Italians to the south. The summer just past was one of calamitous drought for central and southern Italy: for almost five months no rain fell in Rome and its vicinity. Under the hot, monotonous, perfectly clear days, one felt the great calm, the slow tranquil beat of classical civilization. The climate of Rome from May to September seems to establish the rhythm of classical economy, the slow stationary economy of chattel slavery,— a climate in which slaves must do the work, and which made necessary the extraordinary planning by the elite of classical civilization to protect its repose. (Example: the unbelievable elaborateness of Adrian's villa near Tivoli, which the Emperor needed to protect him against the enervating Roman summer.) The civilization of the toga and the laurel—of classic repose. With Milan one enters the European climate, the climate of modern historical capitalism (with all its attendant dynamisms), where a certain amount of pushing energy is required to keep one going.

At any rate, the Milanese exhibit a Bürgergeist such as I've never seen in any other city. Stendahl himself observed this, but it has since been developed and qualified by other influences. By the fact, among others, that during recent decades Milan paid one quarter of all the taxes of Italy! Feeling themselves thus rich and economically powerful in comparison with the rest of Italy, the Milanese have naturally tended to look down on the other Italians, to consider themselves more European. A pride which also makes them rather oddly provincial—a provincialism much like that of New York, which latter is fostered also by the great gap between the city, the "Big Town," and the yokel hinterland, the rest of America. In Milan this peculiar Bürgergeist has always taken the direction of intensified political consciousness—now perhaps more than at any time since the explosion of Bonaparte's entry in 1798.

Yet this political life of the city is puzzling, confused, harbors an unexplained mystery. What happened in Milan during the first few weeks

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after the April Insurrection that drove out the Germans and saw all the key points, services, material life of Italy's principal city taken over by a population armed, organized, and officered by radicals? And then? Nothing. And since that time the tide has been running down steadily and continuously. The Allies had arrived meanwhile, but that doesn't explain the extent of the recession in revolutionary potential. Orders from Moscow? At that time Russia may have wished that nothing disturb the status quo alignment with the Allies. Probably, more fundamentally, the iron fact of material economics: to occupy the factories when the factories are without resources is not to take over the means of production; you may sit in them but you can't make them produce. But perhaps, beneath everything else, simply the failure in energy, the unmeasured exhaustion of the people themselves,—which is everywhere the unchartered surd at the heart of European politics.

European politics is in fact a nest of such surds, and the political reporting I have read seems to me to have barely scratched the surface. Put in the novel position of an on-the-scene political observer, I couldn't avoid the echoes of that great Marxist political journalism of the past which I had admired, so that I began by trying to see the problems of Italy against the fundamentally nineteenth-century conception of a possible *national* revolution—a conception not profoundly relevant to the present condition of Europe. Day by day reading of its press disabused me of the Socialist Party: it has no clear conception of what the European tasks of a Left party should be, and it has in its leader, Nenni, a man of totalitarian mind, albeit anachronistically stupid in other ways. (Nenni, for example, deliberately distorted the news about the vote of the French Socialist Party against fusion with the Communists. In Milan, by the way, the movement towards fusion with the Communists is stronger than in Rome, which means only that the Party in the *North* is more honeycombed with Stalinists. The strong show of the Communists in the French national elections will be another push in the direction of fusion.) A political party must deal in immediate futures, and a really socialist revolution—the basic premises of which do not exist in Italy, and probably nowhere else in Europe—is strictly a longterm vision. All Europe is now in the position of a backward nation —the position of Russia in 1917—and a so-called "socialist" revolution, within the framework of a national state, would only be the birth throes of a new totalitarian abortion. (This backwardness is so complete and paralyzing that only someone living in the midst of Europe's universalized want will remember the sinking feeling on the morning of August 18th of having opened the paper and read the Potsdam Declaration, the charter for Russian looting to reduce permanently the level of western Europe to her own.) The immediate future of Europe is to be made on the stage of international relations, in breaking down the old inter-

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national structure and habits, to which process the piece by piece breaking down of the old bourgeois property relations, badly shaken already, is to be subordinated. In short, for a socialist (not necessarily a member of any party bearing the name) the present situation of Europe demands a complete revision of Marxist tactics, based on historical perspectives for Europe not accessible to the nineteenth-century parties.

To put it another way, I found myself bit by bit transferring my interest to the press of the Action Party—the only one from the reading of which I can come away without a sense of moral uncleanliness. This Party—of which Parri, by the way, may not be, his personal integrity aside, the best representative—is recruited largely from the radical intellectual elements of the lower bourgeoisie; does not profess to speak exclusively for "the working class"—that pestiferous phrase of self-deceit and demagoguery by which Nenni and Togliatti attempt to manipulate the people into a new totalitarianism—but has a program well to the left of the Socialist Party. And, of course, of the Communist Party, which has no program at all except the desire to come to power, leaving its program to the day by day improvisation from the immediate exigency and the last Moscow order. But, of course, the Action Party is without mass following, and one has a sense of hopelessness in watching it, except that its very presence may produce some intellectual leaven among the leaders of the Socialist Party.

From the start it had only been a question of time till Parri would be forced out, and a new shuffle of posts attempted. His government had done nothing—but absolutely nothing!—since coming into office. Poor Parri a *fainéant,* a Merovingian king without even an active Mayor of the Palace! It was to be predicted: a government that fulfilled the physicist's dream of an absolutely stable system in which the balance of forces cancelled out the possibility of any action. The stalemate might have been prolonged, but the Right, which had been benefitting by it, had already acquired enough advantages to call the turn. Will the new government swing to Right or Left? During the past months the Right has been picking up its head, consolidating its forces, preparing itself for an eventual show of strength. It has lost some of its timid fear of the Communists, partly because the latter have been losing popular favor by the Russian foreign policy, particularly in the matter of Trieste, and now lately with Tripolitania and the Dodecanese; partly, as the comforting protection of Allied occupation continues; principally, perhaps, because of the Italian ability to forget, to become guiltless. That has been my most depressing experience in the country: nowhere among the bourgeoisie or lower classes did I encounter a sense of guilt for the past: the Fascists? they were the other people!; or, more calmly, as if acknowledging an error as trivial as some passing social rudeness: yes, we were all Fascists. Centuries of Cathol-

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icism have long since made it impossible for this people to experience human guilt. The guiltlessness is not so important in itself as the correlate it implies: the inability to grasp profoundly the sickness of Europe (their own sickness) and the need for its revolutionary change.

Will the sharpening tension between Left and Right lead to open conflict and insurrection? This is the bad dream of the Allied Military Intelligence in the North. The meetings of the intelligence staff (conducted by the British, and in which the Americans take a bored and languid secondary role) have been following an almost invariable agenda: raids to discover arms hidden by the Italians; economic reports: which plants need licenses or Allied money to start, and also much about strikes and how to prevent them; but ending always with a discussion of the great bogey of the general insurrection to be led by the Communists, which was predicted for August, repredicted for September, and is now put off by these prophets till the winter, that waits like Grendel. The prospect of such an insurrection has also been played up by the American press (*Time,* for example), but nobody has made clear who is equipped to lead it. There may be sporadic outbreaks as conditions of life during the winter worsen and people are driven to unbearable straits. (At times last winter for some people I knew in Rome it became an overwhelming physical question: Can I hold out till the first warmer days?) There may be a coup from the Right, but this could probably be accomplished through largely parliamentary means.

The Communists? Their role will depend, of course, on Russia's particular requirements at the moment in the international field, but I doubt whether they are equipped—in terms of mass popular following—to lead a general insurrection. The activity of the Russians towards this possible insurrection is a mystery that causes considerable worry to the gentlemen of Allied Intelligence. When two Russian officers were observed entering the CP headquarters in Milan, a formal report (in proper duplicate) on the subject went immediately to the desk of the chief intelligence officer! But this little touch of bureaucracy was too much, even for the solemn British, and a general smile went around: Well, well, news!

4.

I've had my own tiny and momentary peep into one of the things the Russians have been doing in Italy.

Though Italy lies outside the seething pathways of central Europe, the overflow of refugees nevertheless washes down from the North: Jugoslavs, Rumanians, Poles, White Russians. The American flag outside my building became an invitation to refuge, like the sight of a cross over a cathedral in the Middle Ages. (The myth of *America Savior* still blooming in the minds of Europe's millions! I was moved.)

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That particular morning I found my office crowded with several families of White Russian refugees. They had escaped into Italy from southern Germany, where they had been put to work in German factories, and they were now in state of panic fear that they would be turned over to the Russian officials and sent back to Russia. This had already happened, they said, against their will to one or two of the people in the camp where they were held.

I tried to reassure them: they were letting their fear run away with them, the NKVD couldn't operate to pick people out of camps run by the Americans and British. There was nothing else I could do. These people weren't my problem, another office had jurisdiction over them. (Ah. it's not so easy to be a small bureaucrat!)

Besides, I believed what I'd said: the Allies couldn't be allowing such things.

That afternoon, however, happening to be in the Allied Commission building, out of curiosity I went in to see the officers in charge of Displaced Persons.

A big bouncy Briton, Colonel F., spoke to me with that casual and easy English politeness that has only to turn the merest shade or nuance to become patronizing and insolent:

"As you probably well know, under the terms of the Yalta agreement the Russian government is entitled to take back all Russians who left Russia after 1927. They're simply considered Russian prisoners of war."

No, I didn't know that, but did he know that the political purges developed during the 30's, and the principle would seem to be exactly equivalent to allowing Hitler, while he was still in power, to take back political refugees who left Germany after '33?

Well, he didn't know whether there were any refugees in the camp who had left during the '30's, but Major S, who was handling that particular camp and was familiar with the situation, could probably tell me.

The major turned out to be, as we say, a character. Hungry to put his mouth to an ear, he spent half the time I was with him telling me about his years and troubles in the service of the British Empire.

The information about the Yalta Agreement was repeated. Since the directive from Yalta was clear—what's more definite than the number 1927?—no question about it had ever come up; it wasn't the business of the AC to raise such questions. As for refugees after '27, or during the '30's, he thought there were only "one or two" such.

Meanwhile he kept hopping up and down nervously to answer telephones and buzzers. When he returned, the excitement seemed suddenly to have left him relaxed and confiding:

"You don't have to tell me what those refugees are up against. I

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know. I know most of the poor devils the Russians put on the boat at Taranto never get back to Russia. Something happens to them, they fall off the deck, commit suicide, are never heard from again. But what are the lives of 130 people—there are only 130 Russians in the camp—when it comes to endangering the relations of the big powers? If you'd seen the thousands of men dying on the battlefield that I have, you wouldn't be upset about this handful of bloody refugees.

"Understand me, I don't like the Soviets any better than you do. They're always making damned nuisances of themselves. Every week they bother us with long reports against the officers of the Polish corps. And whose desk do the reports get to? *Mine*. They claim the officers are preventing their men from returning to Poland. The reports are complete, detailed, pages of them, they mention names and places, it takes hours of my time to investigate them. And what do I find out? That there's not a grain—not a damned grain—of truth in them."

(The old technique, I thought, the detailed lie of the Moscow trials.)

He had finished by working himself up into a fury against the Russians, remembering all his personal irritations at their hands. "With the calibre of officers they've sent down here, if they're typical, how they ever stood up to the Germans I don't understand. I DON'T UNDERSTAND!"

But the case of the refugees stood as it was. I'd been enlightened, nevertheless, about Yalta. Franklin D. fixed us in more ways than we know.

5.

Writing from the focus of New York, I think that PR's last letter from Rome may have been too optimistic about the Italian cultural situation, in its present state if not its promise. Not that a revaluation would be caused by the general level of things here; but from what I've since heard is being done in France—not a word of which got through to us in Italy. France has always been the cultural exporter to the whole continent (under Fascism, alas, the importation became an affair of chichi and affectation), and with the present closure of borders the resulting impoverishment is visible everywhere. Paris is now farther from Rome than from New York. Leonora Fini, the surrealist paintress, persuaded an agreeable French aviator to fly in three Schiaparelli hats from Paris, but apparently he wasn't able to bring any Parisian ideas—Existenz or otherwise—with him. When after 20 years it was suddenly permitted to the Italians to have ideas again, they found themselves with neither the materials nor the point of departure for thought. One doesn't enter the modern world by fiat, at a bound. And, of course, the backward

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situation always begets its own positive thesis of reaction: this time among the Communist intellectuals, who are preaching a form of cultural nationalism(!), exhorting painters to return to the great Italian tradition: "It's time for painting to speak Italian again, it's spoken French too long."

In Milan, to be sure, there are more signs of the modern world in letters. Here the resistance to the Germans and the Fascists—much more perilous and exhausting than the resistance in France to the Germans alone—did not permit literary men even the leisure to produce anything comparable to the French *"litérature de la résistance,"* but it did beget a quickened sense of the dangers of life, society, and the togetherness of human beings; which may help to bring Italian writers out into the open air, break the shackles of Italian aestheticism that have retarded Italy culturally during this century.

Silone himself seems to have become infected, since his return, by this Italian syphilis, the cult of "fine writing." At any rate, he is now engaged in rewriting all his earlier books—in order, evidently, to reply to the persistent and vicious attacks upon him for his rough unpolished Italian. An astonishing exhibition of this disease, as also of the cult of *timelessness* in Italian writing (a parallel vice, which the political suppression of Fascism helped to foster), were the remarkable pages of Corrado Alvaro's journal in a summer number of *Mercurio*. During the German occupation of Rome Alvaro hid out in a small town in the Abruzzi, posing as a country schoolteacher; here he could observe the goings and comings of Germans, Fascists, the petty thieving of local prefects—in short, the dissolution of the whole Fascist world within one closed intimate cell. But the journal is written outside of history, no political or historical idea ties the author to this struggle, the things at issue in this small scale cataclysm never appear. Apart from the fact that we know what war it is, in what campaign the Germans and Allies are thus lunging at each other through Italy, the diary could have been written in the nineteenth century (not earlier, it has at least a nineteenth-century consciousness), and the final effect is of something very literary and selfconscious, as if the nineteenth-century masters who wrote journals were continuously peering over Alvaro's shoulder as he wrote. This journal might have shone unobtrusively among the pages of some of our own little reviews tranquilly engaged in their endless and placid pursuit of poetry as a timeless essence.

These shackles are broken by a remarkable inversion of values in Curzio Malaparte's *Kaput,* the most notable book to appear in Italy since the arrival of the Allies, which manages to unite itself to the history of Europe at this moment through the fact of its sheer corruption. A document in human abasement—Malaparte's perhaps more than anyone else's—it thereby conveys a sense of the internal sickness, decay,

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and catastrophe of Europe as a whole during the last decade and a half. It's also the first document I've seen from "the other side" in the War, a record of Malaparte's experiences as a war correspondent with the Italian Fascist armies in Russia, as a jester at the court of the German governor Frank in Poland, as a hanger-on in the circles of international diplomacy and nobility in Finland and Sweden. Over-written, verbose, theatrical and operatic, the book nevertheless abounds in brilliant passages: amazing pictures of "the German fear" as they begin to sense the possibility of their defeat in Russia. The book has been a tremendous best-seller in Italy—a fact which made me somewhat late in coming to it since I thought it would be just another salacious broadside (they now flood the Italian press!) on the whoring and amorous life of the Regime. Interestingly enough, and not at all untypically, Malaparte, who hobnobbed with Ciano and the Germans, has now become a member of the Communist Party!

These cultural shackles may be broken if the center of Italian life shifts again outside of Rome. Fascism did no greater disservice to the country's culture than by draining writers and artists into Rome, which became the bureaucratic center of the nation. The atmosphere of Rome is a deadly concentration of some of the worst features of Italian life and society (of which Fascism, in its cultural aspects, was an outgrowth as well as promoter): the closed and oppressive family life, woman-dominating and woman-dominated, which might be summed up as the ferocious cult of the madonna as mistress; the conniving *furberia* of the bourgeoisie, the petty snobbery of the lower aristocracy, and in the background, like the ancient malarial mist of Latium, the baleful lingering sickness of the *aristocrazia nera.* An atmosphere which strangles young men's talents, which invites perpetually the easy retreat to the womb. In another country Alberto Moravia might have been a first-rate writer: he can now use an elaborate Kafkaesque technique on the subject of the social amenities, on who goes in first to dinner. . . . The case of De Chirico, however, is the best graph of the Italian artist's fate in this period. The painter whom Jean Cocteau could speak of in 1913 as the twin giant, with Picasso, of modern painting, retires from the hard struggle of Paris to the quiet backwaters of Rome and his private circle of adulation. Behind this defection lies the working of the intense Italian family and the domineering mother who manages her son into middle-age: the old man, still the young son, returns to sleep in the warm and dripping womb of his admirers, is irritated at the mention of Paris or Picasso, explains incessantly that the latter represents *la barbaria della pittura,* the barbaric decline of painting. Cocteau no doubt exaggerated, since De Chirico never really entered into the central stream of modern painting; though he was a creator of surrealism, it was in that aspect in which surrealism itself remains outside modern painting. Nevertheless,

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nothing in that moving early period could predict this dead academic painting that now results. Though, of course, like all reactions, this too is bolstered by an elaborate metaphysic: an eighteenth-century theory of the *cucina della pittura*—a strict equivalent in painting for the Italian theory of "fine writing" in literature.

THE LINES

After the centers' naked files, the basic line
Standing outside a building in the cold
Of the late or early darkness, waiting
For meals or mail or salvage, or to wait
To form a line to form a line to form a line;
After the things have learned that they are things,
Used up as things are, pieces of the plain
Flat object-language of a child or States;
After the lines, through trucks, through transports, to the lines
Where the things die as though they were not things—
But lie as numbers in the crosses' lines;
After the files that ebb into the rows
Of the white beds of the quiet wards, the lines
Where some are salvaged for their State, but some
Remanded, useless, to the centers' files;
After the naked things, told they are men,
Have lined once more for papers, pensions—suddenly
The lines break up, for good; and for a breath,
The longest of their lives, the men are free.

RANDALL JARRELL

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Paris Letter

DEAR PR:

It's snowing tonight, on Notre Dame and Luna Park, on the lean and hungry-looking student who has just walked past my window, and on the half-starved *sinistrés* (apt term!) living under crates in the ruins of Rouen, Le Havre and Dunkerque. A clear, cold evening and a clean hygienic snow: together they make a greyish pall over Paris. I sit here in my overcoat, blowing on my fingers to keep them from utter paralysis, and wonder how so many of the French managed to survive last winter.

Earlier this evening, before the snow had begun to fall, I went to see the wife of a friend of mine, a French officer stationed in Baden, the H.Q. of the French army of occupation. We sat in Paul's unheated study and talked about him for a few minutes: the immense confusion of the French zone, the ambiguous policy of the government, the unending struggle with red-tape—and suddenly the lights went out. "Ne vous dérangez pas," said Mme P's mother. "C'est la panne." It wasn't the regular shut-down of current, which moves across Paris like an enormous black hand; it was a *panne de délestage,* which one could never foresee and plan for. The neighborhood, and god knows how many other neighborhoods, was suddenly full of people in the process of tripping over chairs, hunting for candles, striking matches, or simply hung foolishly in an elevator-refrigerator immobilized between the sixth and seventh floor of an apartment building.

You have probably heard about all this before, but I insist on telling you that life is extremely uncomfortable here. Being a member of the new master-race, I work in a partially heated office, so that I undergo a slight defrosting from time to time. Moreover, my body, which receives a normal diet, maintains its own (inadequate) heating system. But the French are suffering, less violently and dramatically than during the last period of the German occupation, but intensely and with a kind of insidious ache which is compounded of the constant chill in their bones and of the dismay in their hearts. They had hoped that we would not *let* them reach such a state of distress. . . .

When I returned to Paris, about five weeks ago, there was a general air of optimism among my friends and in the press. The latter, which is predominantly left-wing, was happy about the elections. The former, whatever their political opinions, told me that there was more food in the markets, that bread was no longer rationed and that there would be coal this winter: not much, to be sure, but enough to keep industry

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running and to take the chill out of living quarters, during the worst days. But the margin was narrow, narrower, I should think, than at any time since Villon's, when wolves roamed the Parisian suburbs in search of food. A transportation break-down in the Ruhr, a wave of strikes in the U.S., a decrease in hydro-electric power (last year there were floods, this year there's been an unprecedented drought)—and th gaping misery of the French economy was revealed. Paris has been divided into three sectors, each of which is entirely deprived of electric current during one half of each working day. In addition, the rotating *pannes* strike neighborhood after neighborhood, twenty-four hours a day. The people who scurried around all summer collecting electric heaters are unable to use them, for such current as there is, is strictly rationed, and the slightest excess is punished by heavy fines and immediate stoppage of service. More important, French industry, for whose products my friends are waiting in such dire need, is reduced to a limping schedule of two or three days of work per week.

The French put it mildly: it isn't droll. Driving home this evening through the darkened streets—Montmartre without music and the Concorde without light—I thought with melancholy of the surprisingly gay Paris of last spring, when Hitler was still striking attitudes in Berlin.

Fortunately, neither politics nor culture are immediately dependent upon coal or hydro-electric power; so that we've had not penury, in this period of material misery, of crisis, intrigues, books and concerts. Early in the afternoon, I looked in at an impressive exhibit of Masson's "American" period—impressive but just short of genial, for reasons I shan't stop here to define (I think that all these oils and most of the drawings have been shown in New York, in any case). Shouldering my way out through crowds of those extremely elegant women whom the French God seems to have created for the specific purpose of attending *vernissages,* I came upon Albert Camus. He was towering goodhumoredly over the philosopher Jean Wahl, and telling him that there were many more gaullists in France than "people" thought. Jean Wahl agreed. I, in all diffidence, didn't. I felt that de Gaulle had been kept in power chiefly by the political opportunism of those who saw in him a pretext for avoiding responsibility.

Camus no longer writes the daily leader of *Combat;* he is busy finishing a new novel (a passage of which will appear in PR's French number). But though he lives in relative seclusion, somewhere outside of Paris, Camus has the sharpest, most honest political insight of any French journalist I know—precisely because he is so much more, and less, than a journalist. I tell you all this simply in order to warn you; few French observers, certainly no partisan of any of the three major parties, would go along with the following analysis of what occurred

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here, during the cabinet crisis and the brief battle over the nationalization of credit.

To begin with, the Constituent Assembly bears only an accidental resemblance to the pre-war Chamber of Deputies. This is due, not simply to the left-wing landslide (such a shift to the left is a constant of French politics, viz. the elections that followed the last war) but to the new method of voting, adopted by the Provisional Government at the insistence of the resistance movements, the C.G.T. and the left-wing parties. In the Third Republic, each voting district had its representatives: one voted for individuals one knew as much as, or rather than, for a party. Consequently, the Chamber was full of "personalities," each familiar (in the manner of Tammany ward-heelers) with the local problems of his constituency and all extremely independent with respect to party discipline. Thus, when Millerand or Briand was offered a ministry, he simply resigned from his party (the Socialists were, of course, in the Opposition throughout the twenties) and accepted his "national" mission. This meant that the ex-Socialist ran against a member of his former party at the next elections and usually, thanks to the prestige and pork-barrel of his ministry, he won. He won even if the Socialists "carried" his district, since voters were allowed to *panacher*, i.e. to designate deputies from more than one list. Theoretically, it was quite possible for Jean Dupont to vote for one Socialist, one Communist, and for his old classmate, Pierre, a member of the Croix de Feu.

This year, voters were obliged to designate a *list*, and the lists were constituted by the parties. Moreover, there was a complicated system of proportional representation, which made it possible for parties to "use" the votes they received in the districts in which they were defeated; so that there are deputies in the Assembly who represent no district, but only the left-over votes of a party. The logical next step would be to give parties the power of recall—which the French electorate has never had—and this, I am quite confident, will be written into the Statute of the Parties by the Electoral Commission of the Constituent.

The result, of course, is that nothing is decided in the Chamber and everything in the political bureaus of the parties. The deputies—no one seems to know their names—are simply raised right hands; the debates are lifeless and uninspired, since the outcome is settled in advance by caucuses; the only *independent* deputies are the few scattered representatives of the Right, and those of the waning "assimilated" groups, like the *Mouvements unifiés de la Résistance*.

Thus, although the French Stalinists have not given up hope of splitting the Socialist Party, the latter has actually gained in cohesion and manoeuvrability in the new chamber. Indeed, all parties now wield over their members a power comparable to that which the Communists

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obtained by their peculiar internal organization and the other worldly nature of their faith. When Thorez laughs, all the Communist deputies chuckle, when Duclos shouts "Come, come," it swells to a chorus. In the same way, the MRP bloc breathes in unison with Schumann and Bidault. Political life in France is now expressed in party congresses and in the streets; the legislature, for the moment at least, has been reduced to the formal, ceremonial role of the Japanese Diet.

Meanwhile, the president of the new government is a member of no party and responsible to . . . the Nation. When he feels the call, he addresses himself to that mystical entity in the vague and lofty language of which he is a master. His government enjoys an immense majority in the Assembly, and yet not a single party is willing to take full and unconditional responsibility for it. His presence is providential, not in the ominous sense in which the Right uses the word, but because each of the three great parties, the "young" and "dynamic" MRP and the "pure" S.F.I.O., just as much as the cynical Communists, are more interested, that is, in the coming elections (the Assembly's mandate is for seven months) than in forming the effective majority for which the country voted in October. When de Gaulle made his radio appeal to the nation during the crisis, the Communists grew alarmed and proposed to the S.F.I.O. a social- communist government in which they promised to take the responsibility they have managed to shirk since the formation of the provisional government in Algiers. The Socialists refused. "Such a government," they cried in terror, "would be a government of combat!" And then, as inconsequential bands of students took their cue and began to play the role of the "turbulent populace," we had the nasty consultations, decisions, revisions and general concert of face-saving, culminating in that prize package: the government of national unity, with two war ministers and no navy, with the newspaper of the minister of National Economy attacking the minister of Finances, with the minister of state Thorez subversively calling for the suppression of the portfolio of his colleague, ex-comrade and severest critic, André Malraux.

That is why the law nationalizing credit was voted without the important amendments proposed by the Socialists and Communists—though the latter together have a clear majority in the Chamber. That is why Leon Blum, the object in 1936 and 1937 of a bitter, personal almost pathological hatred on the part of the bourgeoisie, has suddenly become an elder statesman, universally respected ("un homme d'envergure," a right-wing editor said to me the other day, "oui, et je pese mes mots, un *grand* homme")

All this ancient history would be farcical, were it not for the people who are freezing tonight, in the ruins of Le Havre, Rouen and Dunkerque.

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I sit here and blow upon my fingers and think, as Giraudoux might have said, that in the circle formed on a radius of ten miles from my window more artists' fingers are being blown upon at this instant than ever before, in any comparable area of the earth's surface. The literary, musical, artistic activity of this city remains astounding. Since I last wrote to you the Salon d'Automne has had a Matisse show comparable in importance to the Picassos of last year; the Salon of Artists-Under-Thirty offered no single "discovery" but a large number of extremely good people (it is out of such density that the great innovators arise); and there have been dozens of one-man shows, from Rene-Jean Clot to Tal Coat, which have been simply crushing in bulk and in the number of problems they raise. Sartre, after publishing two new novels (both disappointing, after *La Nausée*), and the first two issues of his new review, *Les Temps modernes,* has flown off to New York. Simone de Beauvoir has published a remarkable novel and presented a very bad play (which is still running). Camus has published some essays on value, *Lettres à un ami allemand,* and staged his "absurd" tragedy, *Caligula.* There has been a great flurry of excitement over the literary prizes, the weeklies publishing stereotyped interviews with the favorites (just as we do with boxers, on the eve of the championship match) and constantly shifting prognostics, all based on the latest inside dope (as we do with horse-races and divorces!). When the prize is awarded, the dailies send photographers and bright young reporters (all of whom are secretly preparing books themselves) to immortalize the ceremony in newsprint. The new laureate climbs upon a chair and tells the microphone how moved he is ("It was a tough fight, mom, etc.")—and the happy young man's over-joyed publisher telephones his delighted printer and discovers that there's no paper and no electricity for the new edition. The newspaper *Combat* has caught the spirit of these Olympic contests by sending a surrealist poet to cover them. Henri Bosco won a prize, I can't remember which, for his *Mas Theotime.* And Roger Vailland's *Drole de Jeu* (which the Houghton Mifflin Co. is going to publish in the U.S.) was a runner-up for the Goncourt and the Theophraste-Renaudot. For the rest, I'm afraid there was no one involved, either as winner or candidate, whom you would care to know. . . . At the same time, the lecture season has produced three minor sensations: first of all, a disquisition by Sartre on Existentialism as a New Humanism, which I hope Raymond Queneau will describe somewhere in his next book. Sartre proved, dialectically, that it was possible to crowd more people into the Club de Maintenant than into the Vieux-Colombier (where Benda was lecturing, the same evening, on the iniquity of modern literature). It was existentialism à la Dubout, with wild-eyed students sitting in layers of three on the laps of inanimate dowagers. The third sensation was a lecture by Maurice

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Nadeau on Surrealism, which almost caused a riot in the hall and ended with Nadeau gravely placing a dunce-cap on the table and walking out. Very much in the Dada tradition.

The extraordinary concentration of French cultural life in Paris (and within Paris, in certain quarters, certain cafes, etc.) is stimulating and, in a multitude of ways, extremely practical. Since all or almost all the young writers are variously involved with each other in a thousand different projects—reviews, weeklies, radio programs, book-publishing, films—it is useful for them to know that if they go to a given cafe at a given hour they are bound to meet almost all the people they may need to see. At the same time, of course, they exchange ideas and generally bedevil each other, as writers should.

There are drawbacks to this system, however, and the most obvious is the hypertrophy of a certain coterie spirit, with the resultant warping of criticism and critical ideas. Every dramatic critic in Paris wrote a long and embarrassed account of Simone de Beauvoir's tragedy, *Les Bouches inutiles,* stressing the nobility of its language and the profundity of its idea. Some were not even embarrassed; they simply praised, shamelessly. Yet the play was so foolishly written and so badly staged that the audience howled at it, "amused and furious," as Sartre would say, throughout the entire performance I saw. This means, I'm afraid, that existentialism, i.e. Sartre's gang, has "seized power" in the French literary world. We, with our writers spread over a continent, may find it difficult to realize how real and efficient is this power: but the fact is that it controls the mechanisms—the publishing houses, the literary weeklies, the theatre—of that still flourishing industry, France's greatest *article de Paris,* culture.

Sartre's seizure of power has not been without incidence upon his own work and especially upon his new review, which seems to have contracted a number of unholy alliances. (The *immediate* result of this new united front is that Sartre, who had been attacked by the Communists and the Catholics for the so-called nihilism of his philosophy, has proclaimed a daring new doctrine of "engagement," which appears to be nothing more nor less than the Comintern's late and unlamented "socialist realism.")

This is a complicated question, and since both Sartre and his review seemed destined for a long and brilliant career we shall have time to discuss it. Let me simply express the hope that we shan't have to do so under the general heading of the increasing Stalinization of French intellectual life. I think not. Camus published an article, a few weeks ago, called "Why I am not an Existentialist." The ineffable Raymond Queneau, the most subtle and original of the living poet-novelists, continues imperturbably to publish his little masterpieces, as though to

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remind us that we are still in the land of Rabelais. The latest of them, *Loin de Dueil,* has a character, a lecherous minor poet, who is subject to attacks of a hitherto unknown disease, which Queneau calls *Ontalgia!*

Le Paris que vous aimates
n'est pas celui que nous aimons
et nous nous dirigeons sans hâte
vers celui que nous oublierons

Topographies! itineraires!
derives à travers la ville!
souvenirs des anciens horaires!
que la memoire est difficile . . .

Books like *Loin de Rueil* and Queneau's thin volume of poems, *Les Ziaux* (from which I have quoted the above lines), return art to its rewarding gratuitousness, its position as an end, an exemplary record of man's audacious and marvelous imposition of order on the world.

H. J. KAPLAN

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Poems

CHRISTMAS IN BLACK ROCK

Christ God's red shadow hangs upon the wall
The dead leaf's echo on these hours
Whose burden spindles to no breath at all;
Hard at our heels the huntress moonlight towers
And the green needles bristle at the glass
Tiers of defense-plants where the treadmill night
Churns up Long Island Sound with piston-fist.
Tonight, my child, the lifeless leaves will mass,
Heaving and heaping, as the swivelled light
Burns on the bell-spar in its fruitless mist.

Christ Child, your lips are lean and evergreen
Tonight in Black Rock, and the moon
Sidles outside into the needle-screen
And strikes the hand that feeds you with a spoon
Tonight, as grumbling Polish night-shifts walk
Over the causeway and their juke-box booms
Hosannah in excelsis Domino.
Tonight, my child, the foot-loose hallows stalk
Us down in the blind alleys of our rooms;
By the mined root the leaves will overflow.

December, old leech, has leafed through Autumn's store
Where Poland has unleashed its dogs
To bay the moon upon the Black Rock shore:
Under our windows, on the rotten logs
The moonbeam, bobbing like an apple, snags
The undertow. O Christ, the spiralling years
Slither with child and manger to a ball
Of ice; and what is man? We tear our rags
To hang the Furies by their itching ears,
And the green needles nail us to the wall.

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PASSAGES FROM THE QUAKER GRAVEYARD

III

All you recovered from Poseidon died
With you, my cousin, and the harrowed brine
Is fruitless on the blue beard of the god,
Stretching beyond us to the castles in Spain,
Nantucket's westward haven. To Cape Cod
Guns, cradled on the tide,
Blast the eelgrass about a waterclock
Of bilge and backwash, roil the salt and sand
Lashing earth's scaffold, rock
Our warships in the hand
Of the great God, where time's contrition blues
Whatever it was these Quaker sailors lost
In the mad scramble of their lives. They died
When time was open-eyed,
Wooden and childish; only bones abide
There, in the nowhere, where their boats were tossed
Sky-high, where mariners had fabled news
Of Is, the swashing castle. What it cost
Them is their secret. I have heard their cry:
"If God Himself had not been on our side,
If God Himself had not been on our side,
When the Atlantic rose against us, why,
Then it had swallowed us up quick."
And the the waters overwhelmed us, slick
And salt went over our souls,
The waters of the proud went over our souls.

V

When you were children, the northeasters ripped
The rotten canvas from your model-boats
And Bremen dinghys in Nantucket. What
You were was camouflaged in spangled coats,
But the blank salvos of Versailles had stripped
You in their bluster and your teeth were cut
On a barbaric broom-pole's butt,
Churning into your thin

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Blue-blooded chin;
There was cold steel behind the horseplay. But
Even your stolid prescience sensed the time
Was ripe to take a broom
And clear this room
Our vestibule to crime:

Recall the shadows its doll-curtains rained
On Anselm Winslow's ponderous plate from blue
Canton, the breaking of the haggard tide
On the gigantic print of Waterloo,—
The blacks and whites obscurely waterstained
With a curled scar across the glass. You cried
To see the Emperor's eagle-standard slide
From the gloved cuirassier
Staff-officer
With golden leaf cascading down his side;
And a dragoon, his plough-horse rearing, swayed
Back on his reins to crop
The buttercup
Bursting upon the braid.

VII

And now that the long smother snaps your spine
Across Poseidon's shins
To banquet the disgusting gulls and terns
Of the debauched Atlantic, Sailor, and spins
Your green-eyed liquefaction to the sterns
Of the ships of the line
At drydock; will the sun,
Descending, harnessed, harrassed, huge,
Horse up the ocean, spun,
In the fiery deluge,
World-wide? The tide, my cousin, turns again
And the corrosive smoulder of its mould
Burns out the babble of the world's untold
Kyrie in the cordage of your brain,
The knock and knowledge of the rainbow's fouled
And halcyon summer. You are dead and gone
Where loud-mouthed terror howled:

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"How slowly time's lubricious feathers move;
O when will the long, dallying day have done
And lend me leave to come unto my love?"

AS A PLANE TREE BY THE WATER

Darkness has called to darkness and disgrace
Elbows about our windows in this planned
Babel of Boston where the money talks
And multiplies the darkness of a land
Of preparation where the Virgin walks
And roses spiral her enamelled face
And die a coon's age on unwatered streets.
Our Lady of Babylon, go by, go by,
We were once the apples of your eye;
The flies are on the plane tree in the streets.

The flies, the flies, the flies of Babylon
Buzz in our ear-drums while the devil's long
Dirge of the people detonates the hour
To floating cities where his golden tongue
Enchants the gold-bricks of the Babel Tower
To raise tomorrow's city to the sun
That never sets upon these hell-fire streets
Of Boston, where the sunlight is a sword
Splitting the belfry in King's Chapel. Lord,
The flies are on the plane tree in the streets.

Flies strike the miraculous waters of the iced
Atlantic and the eyes of Bernadette
Who saw Our Lady standing in the cave
At Massabielle, saw her so squarely that
Her vision put out reason's eyes: the grave
Is open-mouthed and swallowed up in Christ.
O walls of Jericho! And all the streets
To our Atlantic are singing: "Sing, Wall.
Sing for the exaltation of the King."
The flies are on the plane tree in the streets.

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AFTER THE SURPRISING CONVERSIONS

September twenty-second, Sirs: today
I answer. In the latter part of May,
Hard on Our Lord's Ascension, it began
To be more sensible. A gentleman
Of more than common understanding, strict
In morals, religious in behaviour, had kicked
Against our goad: a man of some renown,
An useful and honorable person in the town,
He came of melancholy parents; prone
To private spells, for years they kept alone:
Good people, but of too much or little wit,—
His uncle, we believe, was killed of it.
I preached one Sabbath on a text from *Kings;*
He showed concernment for his soul. Some things
In his experience were hopeful. He
Would sit and watch the wind knocking a tree
And praise this countryside Our Lord has made,
Once when a poor man's Guernsey died, he laid
Ten shillings on the doorsill; though a thirst
For loving shook him like a snake, he durst
Not entertain much hope of his estate
In the latter portion of his time; of late
He meditated terror and he seemed
Beyond advice or reason, for he dreamed
That he was called to herald Judgment Day
To Concord. In the latter part of May
He cut his throat. And though the coroner
Judged him delirious, soon a noisesome stir
Palsied our Village. At Jehovah's nod
Satan seemed more let loose amongst us; God
Abandoned us to Satan, and he pressed
Us hard, until we thought we would not rest
Till we had done with life. Content is gone.
All the good work is quashed. We are undone.
The breath of God has carried out a planned
And sensible withdrawal from this land;
The multitude, once unconcerned with doubt,
Once neither callous, curious, nor devout,

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Starts at broad noon as though some peddler whined
At it in its familiar twang: "My friend,
"Cut your own throat! Cut your own throat! Now! Now!"
September twenty-second, Sirs, the bough
Cracks with its russet apples: in the dawn
The small-mouthed bass breaks water, gorged with spawn.

ROBERT LOWELL

THE CRICKET

Admire all those men: they were shot in thickets;
Admire all those men: they were crushed in trenches;
Admire all those men: they were drowned in oceans;

Admire them, sang the cricket in the twilight,
They kept their honor and went down to death.

So many are the faces here at twilight;
The names are myriad, myriad are the nameless:
They sleep the general peace of generations.

Learn, said the cricket, how they came to die:
The cruel grew crueller and the mild were dead.

Honor Hector, sang the cricket weeping,
Remember Achilles, recall brave Patroclus,
Think, too, of Hauptman Heilig, Corporal Cobb.

I can't help weeping, wept the little cricket,
Time runs in cycles and the young must die.

Whether at Yorktown, Bull Run, or at Flanders,
Or near an atoll in the vast Pacific,
They kept their honor when they had to go.

Admire them, sang the cricket in the twilight,
Say that they knew their purpose when they died.

J. V. HEALY

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MIAMI BEACH (VIA MILLIONAIRES' ROW)

Down the grand paradisiacal drive
with property one thousand dollars an inch,
we drive slowly as a hearse past the houses;
we want to glimpse them all as our last,
the lasting luminaries, loving light.

Down the green fingered road by the water,
beneath the royal Indian palms,
not one root here but that was transplanted,
a quickened migration made natural;
we crawl slowly, normal as snakes.

A bright snake eye it takes to see
the houses of the rich fenced in
between Australian Pine, the fine
and formidable elusiveness of wealth.
With stealth we crawl on bellies in.

Flamingo painted windows, peacock roofs!
A glistening octopus of tinted glass!
The grass is better sod than any grave,
it covers up the sand and seaweed, mud,
wherever God dare show His ugly face.

Swimming pools of tile, all molar white!
Sharks' teeth biting in a little bowl!
Past the sensitive swimmers we go slowly;
they do not see us for their world
contains neither middleclass nor death.

Down the grand paradisiacal drive
with hoops of Oriental bridges rolling,
we follow the island that has no cemetery,
nor crematory, nor mortician's mirth.
Here, laughter can scarcely be heard

above the din, the drowning Atlantic.
But here, we've reached the causeway's turning

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and are cast off again to our provincial land
where death is commonplace. And sick humankind
beckons and calls us to its invalid neighbor.

JANE MAYHALL

WIDOW

The doubting widow cheats
Her widow weeds. Betrayals
From the tubular dark
Sweeten the larkspur feet
That spike her broken marble day.

The neighbors' children skip
In furbelows she dreams
As wreaths. The young at play
Cripple the young she seems
On her memorial day.

Geraniums by the spoonful
Redecorate the guile
Penelope unlips.
The sunlit icicle drips
On the dated Doric rubble.

GEORGE ANTHONY

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Connoisseur in Chaos: Wallace Stevens

WYLIE SYPHER

At a time of determined anti-romanticism Wallace Stevens has never concealed his own romantic affiliations; the success of his verse must be measured against the recent vogue of the metaphysical. Allen Tate has formulated our distaste for poetry that does not integrate the denotative with the connotative, that slackens tensions through irresponsible denotations, that grasps the actual world feebly, and that communicates an affective state—what Shelley called remote and minute distinctions of feeling. A great deal of Stevens' verse, imperfectly articulating the denotative and connotative, conveys minute and remote distinctions of feeling. The denotative level in Stevens is imagist — an intensely visual statement with virtuoso sound, color, rhythm. This visual statement, however, may have little to do with the connotative, affective level of statement on which his fictions are his feelings. The speculative passages in Stevens belong in a category of pseudo reference, to use Yvor Winters' term; behind the intellectualized phrasing is an imprecision of thought almost unparalleled in modern verse, which has depended, it is said, upon the counterpoint of the intellectual against the affective, the definite against the indefinite.

In fact, Stevens has demonstrated the uses of imprecision. First, the very fictions that compose the world for him are emphatic states —fictions that are feelings. They are not, for example, what they are in Eliot, scriptural, ritualistic, doctrinal; the differences between "Sunday Morning" and "The Waste Land" in this regard are notable. Nor is Stevens' poetry, except in its imagist, denotative, extensional moments, directed toward objects, or to living amid objects. The characteristic motion of Stevens is centrifugal, not centripetal: the nuances of feeling and association, as in "The Idea of Order at Key West," extend indefinitely outward from the statement; whereas in most modern verse the meanings tend to fall at once and heavily inward upon texture, upon the logic and precision of statement, then by repercussion to diffuse outward. The intimations of Eliot rise by

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opposition to the complex allusion to traditional denotations. In Stevens the intimations move directly toward the "fiction" of feeling beyond and transcending the statement; the fiction dissociates itself from the object, but not by repercussion. Thus occurs a tone of reverie that is anti-metaphysical. The reading of Keats' Nightingale Ode is an experience more akin to the reading of "Peter Quince at the Clavier" than to reading Eliot.

The romantic dis-equilibrium and slackness of tension may be illustrated by the extreme imprecisions of passages that may be termed pseudo-Shakespearian:

. . . Although she strews the leaves
Of sure obliteration on our paths,
The path sick sorrow took, the many paths
Where triumph rang its brassy phrase, or love
Whispered a little out of tenderness . . .

. . . desire for day
Accomplished in the immensely flashing East,
Desire for rest, in that descending sea
Of dark, which in its very darkening
Is rest and silence spreading into sleep.

In contrast is the imagism that does actually fall inward toward the object itself; but only toward a visual, auditory, tactile apprehension of the object, toward sensuous denotations. In brief, the essential romanticism appears in the fracture between Stevens' conceptual, affective and imagist phases. Objects themselves, sensuously realized, do not symbolize the "fictions," the affective evocations, radiating beyond them; nor do the equivocal concepts terminate in the senses. His evaluations are temperamental responses through which the world is "felt."

II

"Esthétique du Mal," the latest variation upon Stevens' theme that by feeling we live "as and where we live," is scored more somberly than might be expected. There appears a new phrase that, if elaborated, might release him from the patterns of composition and conception that have bound him almost hypnotically:

Life is a bitter aspic. We are not
At the center of a diamond . . .

By this insight Stevens might translate the problem of the poetic

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imagination to levels of a humanism that has been claimed for him but that he has never actually attained. For a score of years in both verse and prose Stevens has set the issue in terms of the adequacy of landscape as fiction, the adjustment of desire to the object, of the sensibility to intellectual constructs, of the world to the ultimate Plato.

Stevens has spent his energies in evading the absolute, the total fiction. His dread of the glass man—the rational man—his contempt for metaphysicians sprawling under the August sun, means that he has set one human faculty—reason—over against another—sensibility—in a dichotomy that has deprived him of what the poet most needs, fictions themselves. His plea has always been for the "fiction that results from feeling," or, as he has lately put it, "a sense that we live in the center of a physical poetry, a geography that would be intolerable except for the non-geography that exists there." To Stevens philosophy has meant rationalism; he has disregarded the fact that the most illuminating philosophies always have been touched with that ultimate Platonic insight, the *aretê sôtêrias,* which is not rationality at all, but reason in its most exalted mood—wisdom. To substitute for any philosophic response ("official" is his word) an entirely temperamental one results in a hypertrophy of the "poetic" sensibility at the expense of poetic intelligence. "There are also," Socrates is said to have remarked, "misologists, or haters of ideas." Stevens has always proclaimed himself a misologist. Yvor Winters, by his own hard analytics, complains of Stevens' system of thoughtlessness, his hedonism. In spite of hedonist impulses, Stevens in really a misologist; curiously, he is a misologist obsessed by a thesis.

At the very moments when he identifies himself as a native of the world he has been forced to contend with hateful ideas amid solid, static objects—the parts of his world. His resolution has been a law of inherent opposites: "Two things of opposite natures seem to depend/On one another." This law is fulfilled through a pagan, and at times orgiastic, humility before things as they are—the euphoria of being "without a description of to be . . . being an ox."

In "Esthétique du Mal" appears humility of another order, alien to the earlier Stevens even in his malcontent vein—"Pain is human"; this too is "part of the sublime" and involves an imaginative apprehension of the human situation in which he has been deficient. Then the theme is put aside as Stevens returns to his wonted improvisations, exercises in viewing the world:

The greatest poverty is not to live
In a physical world.

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Thus the "Esthétique" reiterates the plea that "the genius of the body, which is our world," be not "spent in the false engagements of the mind." Yet it is difficult to accept the structure of things for the structure of ideas, and he stands in need of fictions by which to live "as and where we live."

III

Here is the central problem in Stevens: the imagination in the Waste Land. Essentially Stevens has remained a poet of the Waste Land—disillusioned as to the gods, June evenings and Moscow. Like Eliot, he has set the issue:

> *The prologues are over. It is a question, now,*
> *Of final belief. So, say that final belief*
> *Must be in a fiction. It is time to choose.*

Stevens cannot choose; his fictions are unreliable since they prove to be merely his sensitivities. Two alternatives are possible: to grip "the essential prose" as his Crispin attempted, or to establish a fiction so absolute that its hegemony over the sensibilities is total. Stevens avails himself of neither because he devotes himself to paganism and obscurantism, "the fiction that results from feelings." The consequences are the optimism that causes Stevens uneasiness whenever he realizes that pain is human, and the futility of his turning to the spring sun while "employer and employee contend." His most concentrated effort is in seeing the world in a dish of peaches. He is deprived of nightingales, and is "weary of the man that thinks"; so the poet must offer the supreme fictions.

As obscurantist and pagan Stevens belongs to the post-World-War-I era. His cynicism about the bourgeoisie, his uncertainty on larger social issues, his depreciation of the gods, his discovery that "the door / of earth penetrates more deeply than any word," his measuring the world by the eye suggest the practised fleshliness of the 'twenties, paganism at Hartford. Often his deepest perception amounts to the seventh stanza of "Sunday Morning," a boisterous devotion to the sun as a chant of the blood. Stevens is not what Gorham Munson called him, a dandy; he is one of the more cogitative pagans of the 'twenties roving amid the sharper violences of the 'forties. His euphoria has at moments diminished.

He has not attempted, like Eliot, to adopt fictions that seem to bring larger clarifications than they actually do. "Sunday Morning," for example, is not doctrinaire or mannered. Stevens has understood

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that these supremacies cannot be re-established, at least in their old autonomy. The speculative energy of his verse has served as a commentary upon the disorganization of the poetic temperament in a time destitute of fictions. Living in the "immense detritus of a world / that is completely waste," knowing that we have been offered stones, not bread, in Monday's dirty light, he diagnoses himself as a man whose pharynx is bad because the time is so indifferent; Marx, too, has spoiled the landscape for him. Without being committed to dogma or abstractions or the dialectics of a social program, he has betokened the disabilities of the pure poetic fiction, which in ways has proved a cul-de-sac narrower and drier than the letter of the law.

Stevens has been perilously near making a great refusal. As he has admitted, the contemporary poet cannot evade the pressure of the anti-poetic—the anti-poetic in the streets of Passaic and Rutherford. We may allow him an ivory tower from which one gains "such an exceptional view of the public dump and the advertising signs." The questions are whether Stevens has not been too dimly aware of this essential prose, and whether he considers Rutherford and Passaic anti-poetic simply because of being Rutherford and Passaic, or because their violence is inexorable.

In spite of his profession that the imagination must adhere to reality—that the subject matter of poetry is the life lived among the solid static objects of space (a scene composed by the very living in it) —precisely what we miss in Stevens is this composing amidst objects themselves. His view of the poetic imagination ultimately opposes to the violence without a violence within, and identifies poetry with counter-pressures. The violence of his pressure against "mournful" objects imposes upon his experience of them arbitrary and even too-abstract constructions. The blue guitar does not right the balance between actuality and imagination. The composition too autocratically determines the form of the experience instead of serving as a coherence within experience. These arbitrary constructions are of limited reference, often retinal and auditory. Stevens has said that "a poet's words are of things that do not exist without the words." From this Crocean view it does not necessarily follow, however, that "poetry is words" or that "words, above everything else, are, in poetry, sounds." Delmore Schwartz has remarked that Stevens takes an art-perspective. His interests are compositions. He has consumed his talents in formulating a poetical epistemology to define the categories by which the anti-poetic (and the poetic) are to be apprehended. He has been the connoisseur of his own responses to the chaos about him.

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IV

Stevens has never determined whether the poem generates in situation or myth; whether the imagination really ought to triumph in the urgent "endless struggle with fact." To conclude, as he does, that nothing will resolve the dilemma "except a consciousness of fact as everyone is at least satisfied to have it be," is to conclude nothing, for the myth that brings such consciousness is wanting. Stevens is repelled by, and intoxicated with, the object:

The poem of the mind in the act of finding
What will suffice. It has not always had
To find: the scene was set; it repeated what
Was in the script.
Then the theatre was changed
To something else. Its past was a souvenir . . .
It must
Be the finding of a satisfaction, and may
Be of a man skating, a woman dancing, a woman
Combing. The poem of the act of the mind.

This instant penetration of process to the degree of identification of mind with object is not always possible, however, since our fictions perversely contend with objects; there are lions in Sweden: after majestic images of the soul—Fides, galled Justitia, Patientia—have become souvenirs in our leafless wintry day

. . . the whole of the soul, Swenson,
As every man in Sweden will concede,
Still hankers after lions, or, to shift,
Still hankers after sovereign images.

By reason of the souvenir, the nostalgia for myth, Stevens is a pseudo-hedonist, a savage troubled. His impulse to surrender to the object is cultivated with a violence prepense. The result is a falsetto optimism:

The . . . plastic parts of poems
Crash in the mind

with a resonance that seems a little contrived. Throughout we miss the melancholy of Eliot and find instead Stevens the misologist striving to think "without the labor of thought," to sustain "a gaiety that is being":

. . . all
Things were the truth, the world itself was the truth.

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The poet is a virile youth whose ecstasy suffices for his fictions—unless there come somber figurations of social unrest, the pain of war, the essential prose.

Amid the violences of his mature desires the poet, in his "radiant and productive atmosphere," surrenders to the "morality of the right sensation." The green fish in the reeds will be his absolute; the supreme fictions will be revealed within experience, which itself is epiphany—"ecstatic identities between one's self and the weather."

This adequacy of landscape is an organic sensibility. By the "heart's residuum" the war between mind and sky is suspended, for desire springs up within the object, and the concept within the experience of desire and the object. There are thirteen ways of looking at a blackbird. There are "so many selves, so many sensuous worlds," as in the private worlds of Bertrand Russell's realism. The identity of the conceptual with the experiential recalls Wordsworth's repudiation of reason as a false secondary power of multiplying distinctions:

It may be that the ignorant man, alone,
Has any chance to mate his life with life
That is the sensual, pearly spouse, the life
That is fluent in even the wintriest bronze.

Transcendentalism is, however, involved in the Wordsworthian situation. By the immediacy of the sense sublime, Wordsworth transcended his organic sensibilities and attained his supreme fiction. Stevens has of late known such moments—when "time flashed again" and by an immaculate ecstasy he shared the first idea. Ordinarily he is so hotly pursued by lions in Sweden that he cannot evade the metaphysical question and accept "to be without a description of to be": the supreme fiction must not only change and give pleasure, but must be abstract as well. He must impose an order:

. . . But to impose is not
To discover . . . to find,
Not to impose, not to have reasoned at all . . .
. . . To find the real,
To be stripped of every fiction except one,
The fiction of an absolute.

The composition of things no longer reads legibly—the myths of rose and ice are done; and Stevens is left to repine for absolutes and to be tormented with a sense that the very

. . . thought of her takes her away.
The form of her in something else
Is not enough . . .

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Thus living in many sensuous worlds indicates a failure in imagination. The supreme fiction becomes fictitious indeed, a dizzy pluralism, a rage for order that cannot be spent:

> *. . . the vast repetitions final in*
> *Themselves and, therefore, good, the going round*
> *And round and round, the merely going round,*
> *Until merely going round is a final good.*

Stevens has established, in spite of his misology, the "fiction" of relativism. As Whitehead has explained, the isolated event has lost its status in complexes of events until "the whole is evidently constitutive of the part." By a fiction more available to science than to the imagination, Stevens theorizes that the whole cannot exist without the parts, that the part is the equal of the whole; under these sanctions he lives incessantly but reluctantly in change and accepts the law of chaos as the law of ideas.

Through one of the incongruities of the Waste Land, Stevens has in effect allied himself with so alien a figure as Paul Elmer More in resisting the Demon of the Absolute. In 1928 More announced: "This Demon of the Absolute is nothing else but rationalism, what Francis Bacon called the *intellectus sibi permissus.*" Although the orthodox humanist would insist that landscape is not adequate, Stevens has devoted himself to elaborating More's thesis that "there are no absolutes in nature; they are phantoms created by reason itself in its own likeness, delusions which, when once evoked, usurp the field of reality and bring endless confusion in their train."

Stevens himself is troubled to utilize his relativism: whether he will or no, man "must become the hero of his world." The gusto of living incessantly in change is a paralyzing optimism, a denial of loneliness in Jersey City, of the old chaos of the sun. If, as Whitehead says, "endurance is the repetition of the pattern in successive events," Proust rather than Stevens has dispensed with fictions and lived in the texture of process with a neutrality and unremitting grasp of the essential prose.

Dispossessed of adequate fictions, Stevens at moments may be Prufrock—"a most inappropriate man in a most unpropitious place." From this unpropitious place and time of year, from promenades among ideas, Stevens resorts to bright landscapes, the "majors of the August heat"—a nomad exquisite of the Waste Land whose philosophy is an exercise in viewing the world.

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V

The exercise itself involves a paradox. To create from the poetic imagination those fictions by which man becomes the hero of his world, "the world must be measured by eye"—"the eye grown larger, more intense"—until one finds "the words for the dazzle of mica, the dithering of grass." The supreme fiction proves to be the gaudiest, most heightened imagist presentation of the object.

The violence of Stevens' imagination often imposes complicated brilliant patterns upon the texture of experience, its "composition":

At the time of nougats, the peer yellow
Sighed in the evening that he lived
Without ideas in a land without ideas,
The pair yellow, the peer.

"Sea Surface Full of Clouds" is an exercise imposing the fictive imagination upon solid static objects; the fiction is the words, the sounds, their composition. A parallel from painting is at hand. The effort of Cézanne and early cubists to "realize" the object completely, to penetrate its mass thoroughly to the depth of psychological and entirely "felt" landscapes, did not demand these fictions. This stage of cubism was succeeded by a more violent resistance to solid objects in space, until the abstract, synthetic, two-dimensional surface evolved. Within the fictions of this *cubisme de conception,* its *déplacements,* its simultaneous perspectives, the painter began to "resist" or "evade" the object: cubism produced what Stevens calls the "dilapidations" of Braque and Picasso. This painting sacrificed connotation in favor of denotation, as Stevens himself suggests—denotations of the mind's arbitrary compositions.

Contrast, however, Picasso's "Three Musicians" compositions with his "Guernica," in which the abstractions identify themselves with an external situation in a symbolism rarely utilized by Stevens, who does not thus see Hartford in a purple light. The designs in Stevens' later work approximate abstractions with great virtuosity of arrangement, but without the "correspondences" of symbolist verse. (Edith Sitwell has contrived similar patterns, that crystallize upon the sensuous and conscious level rather than upon the inward levels of Mallarmé.) The first improvisations—"Carlos Among the Candles," to choose an early one—are keyed in a "suggestive" Maeterlinck-like range in which ellipses (. . .) are intended to be evocative:

The extinguishing of light is like the five purple palmations

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of cinquefoil withering. . . . It is full of the incipiencies of
darkness . . . of desolation that rises as a feeling rises . . .
Imagination wills the five purple palmations of cinquefoil . . .

Then the texture becomes harder, closer, more geometric as Stevens finds his obsessive theme; the abstraction is drier, its presentation more intellectualized; and the decorative medium is more sophisticated. Certain images and colors—green, red, black, white, yellow—are used in disciplined constructions:

Green is the night, green kindled and apparelled . . .
The topaz rabbit and the emerald cat . . .
The greenness of night lies on the page . . .
That elemental parent, the green night . . .
Fat cat, red tongue, green mind, white milk . . .
The lion sleeps in the sun . . .
. . . Light

Is the lion that comes down to drink . . .
Ruddy are his eyes and ruddy are his claws . . .
Red-emerald, red-slitted-blue, a face of slate . . .
Red-in-red repetitions never going . . .

Images of horse and rider, pine boughs casting sibilant shadows, the sun, the moon, and even phrases like "washed in his imagination" or "washed the imagination clean" become frequent in the prose as well as the verse. The composition is in precise figurations:

To feed on the yellow bloom of the yellow fruit
Dropped down from turquoise leaves . . .

Even the insatiable big bird revolving under the glare of the clownish yellow sun ("Esthétique du Mal") remains so entirely upon the surface of the composition that its evocations are conceptual and ornamental. The complications are exquisite, and sometimes, as in "The Poems of Our Climate" and "Woman Looking at a Vase of Flowers," the gaudiness and synaesthesia of imagism are intellectualized into pseudo-philosophic statement.

Such violently retinal, auditory, tactile effects are foreshortened by the "cultivated," whimsical, even half-academic fastidiousness and punctilio of Stevens' language. In their references the poems are forever alternating between civilization and savagery, the *coterie* and the jungle. There are equatorial passages—the thunders of Yucatan, stars at Tallapoosa, the litter of tropical seas. Stevens has said farewell to Florida in all but his imagery, which indicates how he has remained not only a pagan but a fauve of the sort represented by Dufy or by

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the douanier Rousseau, who treats the "green vine angering for life" with such bland vitality. Neither Stevens nor Rousseau can transcendentalize "that alien, point-blank, green and actual Guatemala" beyond an affirmation of image that is at times almost sinister. The colors are as brutal as they are sonorous. The sensuous density is barbarous—but ordered into austere statement.

The cast of primitivism in the imagery is odd: in the early poems one moved in the atmosphere of the cruise ship. There was a resort primitivism, perhaps as if *Fortune* were reporting upon the Waste Land. One can thus distinguish levels of the primitive in Stevens: a "social" one and one of temperament. Gorham Munson spoke of Stevens' "flair for bright savagery," and the voluptuousness of his language used to be called exotic. It is more important to remark the polarities in his imagery, swinging as it does between the basic slate and red weather, dilettantism and instinct. Stevens has remarked that feeling accumulates readily "in the abnormal ranges of sensibility." The extraordinary fierceness of Stevens' response to the cockerel's shriek and hen's shudder, or to our bourgeois cuisine of human heads "brought in on leaves, crowned with the first, cold buds," suggests that his fictions course in his blood.

VI

Stevens' vitality is not of the blood only, of the animal spirit. For a poet living amid a "hacked-up world of tools" he carries himself with a gaiety that will break through his soberest causeries, in indiscreet language, at least, or else in a laughter of the mind. He may have mistaken his talent. His abundance of spirit finds its pitch within the range of high comedy, a range particularly Stevens' own. His ideas of order amid the Waste Land may be misconceived; but Stevens is endowed, as Eliot with his chill humor is not, with the Meredithian comic spirit, a mocking awareness of our absurdities and our pretense. He might even, with his malice against our Trimalchios, have become the Petronius of the Waste Land. Not by the ironic—a metaphysical tone—but by the comic does Stevens comment pertinently upon our desolation; things may not be as he says they are on his blue guitar, but his less grave addresses to all academies of fine ideas are welcome. Within this range he moves with entire competence; here he lives "as and where we live." Neither by blood nor by fiction can he achieve total belief, but by transcendental comedy—"a laughter, an agreement, by surprise"—he affirms

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"a gaiety that is being, not merely knowing." The dramatic in Stevens is most immediate in the casual attack of his comic mood:

A long time you have been making the trip
From Havre to Hartford, Master Soleil,
Bringing the lights of Norway and all that . . .
An opening of portals when night ends,
A running forward, arms stretched out as drilled,
Act I, Scene 1, at a German Staats-Oper.

The comedy of the first and last periods is ringing with the silver laughter of the Meredithian faun; there are often the eruptive imagery, the riotous language, the springing delight over the victim, the intellectual tensions of *The Egoist*. The moments of high comedy in "Le Monocle de Mon Oncle" indicate how defensive are the ironies of "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock." The gaucherie of Prufrock is Eliot's gaucherie—Stevens, without being so ironic, is perhaps more completely the master of absurdity. "The Comedian as the Letter C" may, indeed, mistake pomposity for wit, but even here the buoyancy of spirit carries the elephantine Carlylese jargon.

The euphoria of Stevens is least forced when, surprised by the pleasures of merely circulating, he contends with his ideas in the guise of fat Jocundus.

His commitment to "a land beyond the mind," however, and to going round and round is failure to possess a myth. The task was in any case impossible. One understands why Stevens seizes upon the thesis of the late Henri Focillon that

> Unless and until it actually exists in matter, form is little better than a vista of the mind, a mere speculation upon a space that has been reduced to geometrical intelligibility. . . . Without matter art could not exist. . . . The old antitheses, spirit-matter, matter-form, obsess men. . . . The first duty of any one who wishes to understand anything whatsoever about the life of forms is to rid himself of these contradictions of pure logic. . . .

These forms can be equated with the fictions that are feelings—delusive fictions when one meets essential prose, and becomes aware that

There are these sudden mobs of men . . .
An immense suppression . . .
These voices crying without knowing for what . . .

Here is "fact" as Stevens is presumably not contented to have it. He cannot "evade" or abdicate what Eliot calls moral responsibility; nor can his mind find itself in an alien world. He can offer only notes toward a supreme fiction.

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Film Chronicle

A JUBILANT STORY

Rhapsody in Blue: *The Jubilant Story of George Gershwin.* Note the dispatch with which the subtitle mutes the note of the blues. Hollywood would not have any dismayed. Much is in a name. Under another name, the blues can be given play in comfort.

Where are the blues? This is a success story, complete with final sunburst inevitably reserved for the demise of genius. Poor boy from the Bronx, unappreciated genius, goes "up like an elevator" to become the idol simultaneously of Broadway and Carnegie Hall. "A career you only read about in story books!" Where are the blues?

"Poppa knew," George pleads with Julie. "Success is not enough." George wants Julie. But Julie insists, as Christine had before her: Your destiny lies straight ahead; you don't need anyone or anything. Gershwin moves on from triumph to triumph, more and more successful, more and more lost to himself. His friend Dreyfus has a talk with him: Why isn't he happy? Gershwin (who stands before a self-portrait he's been trying for months to complete, but which "keeps running away from" him) finally cries out in anguish: "Part of me is lost somewhere!" Dreyfus agrees with Poppa: It should've been Julie. "Way down deep," Gershwin sums up, "I'm a family man without a family." Julie perseveres in believing that Gershwin does not need anyone. But when at length, racing on, he ascends to the verge of a breakdown, she telephones. "Oh, Julie !" he gasps, "Meet me! . . . Make up for the lost years! . . . Hurry, darling, *hurry!*" She is coming. He flings aside draperies; sunlight floods the room; he sits at the piano and plays, and a singer who is there sings. "Love walked in and drove the shadows away . . . I had found a world completely new!" It is too late. He is a sick man. . . .

What is the source of this sad story? Critics agree that it is not Gershwin's life. Is this then simply Hollywood's version of the isolation of the artist in bourgeois society, of his nostalgia, in exile, for what Thomas Mann has called "the bliss of the commonplace"? But this pattern of an ascent up the ladder of success that ends in estrangement, turns up again and again on our screens; and the hero or heroine is by no means invariably the Artist. The source is some dim sense of a *general* plight. The concrete terms in which it is expressed in film after

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film are simple-minded: girl and boy unable to get together, and no good reason why they should be unable. Perhaps it is because behind this clumsy pattern there lies in shadow a pattern that is deeper, that audiences submit to as meekly as they do to the ludicrous. It is possible in most films, if one will ignore plot explanations, to distill an image of contemporary man, persuasive as it were in caricature—as here: a man struggling to capture his own likeness, crying, I am lost to myself!, a man, successful beyond others, crying, I am a member of no family; Love, find me a world completely new!

It is not only out of the story elements, out of Hollywood's at least half conscious manipulation of this subject matter, that an image of estrangement emerges in current films. It is formed unconsciously in the motions of the camera. Recall the performance of Gershwin's Rhapsody, in Aeolian Hall. Stock long shots of the hall introduce us. Not evenly but in twitches the drab scene begins to be disarranged. The camera suddenly shoots a bit of orchestra at a tilt, or from an odd perspective; suddenly isolates one member from directly above, in spotlight, shadow cutting off across the floor; isolates this shadow. With these and similar motions it severs the original relationships of objects to the scene as a whole. The background with which we started is first disturbed, gradually obliterated. Background for a close-up of Gershwin becomes a detail of pillar, etched in highlight, like a bit of ruin; the orchestra is poised merely against its own overblown shadows. The scene tends more and more toward geometrical abstraction, and increasingly as it suits this geometry, objects are distorted or fragmentized. Yet these patterns in the formation of which objects lose their identity, do not succeed each other in ordered fashion. They form and dissolve according to an empty whim, dead-end. So little are they subject to any over-all sense of design that throughout there is inserted, quite casually, the kind of long shot with which we started: the hall in all its normality. Also inserted are greedy close-ups of Gershwin's Momma, blowing her nose in emotion, of Oscar Levant fidgeting in vicarious stage-fright, or Gershwin's old music teacher, lying at home mortally sick, but with his radio earphones clamped on, sputtering out his life in an ecstasy of listening in.

The naive relationship to the realism which is its point of departure and to the subjective factor introduced by the personal close-up, should refute any argument that the tendencies described are merely an attempt to match the tendencies of Gershwin's music. But another fact refutes this: these tendencies are general. Even in films where the subject matter or where lack of technical facilities imposes a limit, one can find in small this compulsion of the camera to sever the objects with which it improvises from any positive relation to a known whole.

There is still another fashion in which, whether or not the subject matter of a film is estrangement, this story is told. That is by the nature

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of the dramatic construction of current films. What tends to give one of them its life is not some unified action, the working out of a sensed Order of things; it is the dynamic of personalities exhibiting themselves in a dramatic void. We are allowed to feed upon these personalities, upon their suffering hearts, upon their extraordinary charms or quirks of person.

The star system specializes in prefabricating the dramatic essential, in endowing special personalities with a reality for audiences outside the bounds of any specific film. "Robert Taylor loves Greta Garbo" transcends the reality of the drama of *Camille*. *Anchors Aweigh* depends upon familiarity with the attributes of one of these Personalities, for it derives its pep from playing with this on the bias: Sinatra is given the role of a sailor anxious to learn how to make himself attractive to girls! "You'll just have to do the best with what you've got," his buddy remarks. There is also a sequence in which this sailor encounters Iturbi, who plays himself in the film; he takes Iturbi to be a piano tuner who'd like to be a pianist, and encourages him to keep plugging (we know who he really is); Iturbi compliments *him* on having a rather nice voice (we know the sailor to be *acted by* Sinatra). A strange game of in and out of context.

When Hollywood offers us up an historical character, the essential is again the illusion of intimacy. In its efforts to afford us this, Hollywood is apt to pluck a character abruptly out of an historical context, with grotesque result. Recall that passage in *Wilson* where a montage of headlines announcing the eruption of World War I is followed by a shot of Wilson twiddling plaintively upon the piano a duet he and his wife used to sing: he is missing her. The sudden shift of perspective is accomplished not knowingly but naively. The return and the return again to glut upon the exposed person of the hero, when not, as here, grotesque, tends to become simply monotonous. In the same way, the close-ups which current films insert incessantly, come to appear to wear again and again the same expression. This impression of fatuous grimacing, in space, is provided in a new degree by Oscar Levant in *Rhapsody in Blue*. Levant is here set down in the middle of a story he knows has no relation to the real life of Gershwin; set down, too, in the middle of a strangely assorted company—some, the actual people who participated in his life; some, impersonations of actual people; some, entirely mythical characters. In this shifting illusory world, he goes through the motions of exhibiting to us his intimacy with Georgie, the fun they had together, the turmoil he endured for his sake. Strange motions, unreal contortions.

BARBARA DEMING

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Art and Architecture

NOTES ON THE SPIRAL-THEME IN RECENT ARCHITECTURE

(Illustrations: Tatlin-Tower, Universal, Spiral Store, Musée Mondial, Modern Gallery of the Museum of Non-Objective Art.)

FREDERICK J. KIESLER

THE CREATIVE mind finding its sources in the certitudes of memory rediscovers the spiral.

Bernouilli, 1690, saw, investigated and mathematized for the first time truthfully the law of spiral-structure and gave one the name of "logarithmic."

"The length of radii vectores making equal angles with one another are in geometric progression."

This discovery, namely that of "perpetual renascence" delighted Bernouilli to such a degree that he requested the image of the spiral to be engraved on his tombstone. The inscription reads: *Eadem mutato resurgo.*

That indeed seems to be the secret of the spiral's irresistible hypnotism: continuous rebirth on new planes without losing contact with former ones. An expansion of steps without halt. Continuous motion from within its own force. Power of birth and re-birth.

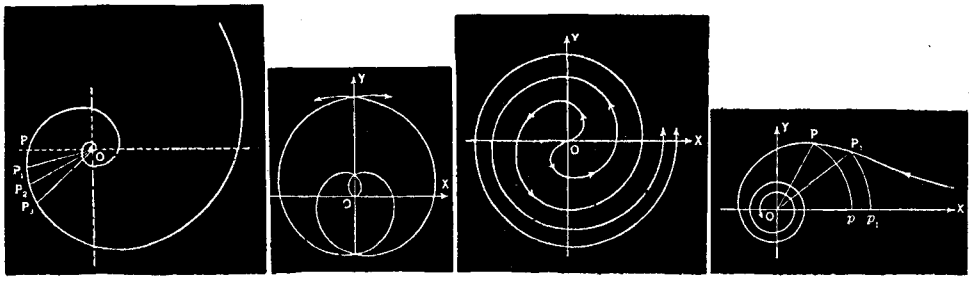
Archimedes using the spiral as a wand to square the circle, 225 B.C.

Fermat discovering his own version 1636.

Lituus-spiral by Cotes 1722

Cochleoid (snail) spiral formulated in 1700 and used as a quadratix of a circle.

Nature is manifold in expressions of spiral growth; observe the forming of spiral nebulae clusters prior to the creation of globular nuclei; witness the tendrils of the vine-leaf, the conic screw-winding of the seed-



Logarithmic *Archimedes* *Fermat* *Lituus*

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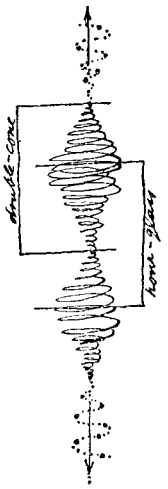
capsule of the Cajophora lateritia, the inverted rolling of the leaf of Struthiopteris exactly in the configuration of the Fermat-spiral (the spokes of the leaflets in perfect focal array), the Aspidium filix mas whose leaves are formed in the Cochleane-Shelter design.

In tools: The gimlet. A screw point-design sufficient to overcome resistance to an inward drive. Stalactites, petrifying in spiral formations. The spring, coiled heliconally, inside a watch, but lifted out, the central coils drop down converting the two-dimensional flat spring into a three-dimensional plastic cone whose tip-pole can be pushed through the wider coils and thus turn the cone up or down.

Animals at rest often "coil" (snake). Retracting snail. Some snail-worms use only a calcite band twisted in an open slender spiral to snuggle on; later the snail becomes part of that coil, shedding a skin tube which hardens and forms with the original skeleton-spire an organic unity and thus a complete shell. One of the most perfect spiral-shells: the Nautilus. Sir John Leslie seems to have been the first (1821) to suggest what was later established, that the septa of the nautilus are in form logarithmic spirals. This animal has a perfect "Spiral-House" of an external symmetrical, more or less closely involute, helical, chambered shell formed of two layers, the outer porcelaneous, the inner pearly (Exterior and interior architects note!).

The "whorl" of hair-growth twisting in the direction of spiral radiation.

The whirl-pool of water. Suction of drain. Intertwining of water gush. Cochlea. Tornado.



The spiral-theme has apparently a two-fold origin: *the to and from.* Gravitation (attraction) and radiation. Inward-drive: (centripetal) equal to relaxation, exhaustion, shelter, peace. Outward-drive: ambition to expansion (centrifugal), acceleration distribution, contact, conquest.

As to variations of helical forms I mention the possibility of adding two types with either the wide bases together, resulting in what could be called a double-cone-spiral-in-space or continuing the tip of a pyramidal spiral into the tip of another spiral, with the result of an hour-glass double spiral. The combination of both varieties results in an Endless Column in space. (If I remember correctly, Brancusi once sculpted a wooden column of similar rhythm and called it the endless column.)

When, under what circumstances was spiral

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formation adopted, adapted or invented in tools and building of man?

He found ready made levels of mountain banks leading upward like steps. Roads winding their way in serpentines to mountain tops. The trunk of a tree with its branches growing in rhythmic ascent used as a ladder to gather fruit. Perhaps this was the first inspiration to winders radiating from a center newel. The spiral-stair, an attempt to circle the square in space. Transformation of the cube (in buildings) into a sphere. *Sphering the cube.* Mutation of an upright ladder, changed by leaning and rotation, into a step-cylinder, resulting in the spiral-stair. Some of the most beautiful spiral stairs in the palace of the Count of Dunois with its wide out-reaching branches of steps, surreal to actual necessity. Progression from abstraction to realism clearly visible in Greek colonnades: Doric capital wholly geometrical, later changed to a paired-spiral volute in the Ionic order, and finally, in the Corynthian column to an acanthus leaf bending its head involutingly, betraying the secret of inspiration (Nature) to the invention of Architectural Order (Observation spiral-tower [17th Century] used by Peter the Great to ride up [Copenhagen].)

Examples of spiral crystallizations in architectural design:

Model of Tatlin's monument, planned 1920, to commemorate the Russian Revolution. A hollow twin-spiral, free-standing steel-frame, pointing up its pole, bearing inside the Administration Building. It was the sculptor gone architect and the architect gone constructivist. A superb attempt at Architecture per se.

My own Space-Theater project (1923) with its central space-stage actually built at the Vienna City Festival 1924. Two wide ascending spiral-ramps leading to a circular platform, the nucleus of action. The ramps (used by actors or locomotive units) had a long straight start in the lituus manner. Floor and top level also connected by an open elevator running through the center. Top level connected by bridge with surrounding balcony level, which made for a three-point support of an otherwise free-standing structure, accenting the floating effect of the ramps.

In the "Endless" a whole spheroid building for theatrical, cinema and sport activities (1924). The Space-theater idea of ramps was extended to form all floors of the vast structure up to its very heights in intertwining ramps.* A building wholly composed of ramps, accessible on all levels by foot and cars. The inside of the paraboloïd shell of the "Endless" was smoothed for projection (see "Catalogue for Vienna Festival, 1924").**

* See for plan and section "Architectural Record," 1930.

** For further Projection-Schemes covering sides and ceiling of Auditorium, see Film Guild Cinema of New York and its description in "Motion Pictures Herald," 1929, and *Contemporary Art Applied to the Store and Its Display,* Brentano's, 1930.

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The "Universal" was a further extension of the idea of space-relation with ramp supports for walking or driving. I designed it in Paris 1925, exhibited it at the World's Fair and next year 1926 in New York at the Exhibition of New Theater Techniques.

Here is how it came about:

I was living in Paris after the first world war. Everybody was concerned with problems of reconstruction: youth, particularly with ideas of resurrecting the spirit massacred; the architects not so much with constructing "minima-homes for everyman" as building nucleï where people might meet and engage in the game of sharpened ideas.

Place de la Concorde had captured me as it had everyone before. With the thousand arms of its candelabras, the spaciousness of this arena received the stranger unconditionally. Evenings, after a rain, the clusters of light transformed the whole area into one iridescent lake, the surface of which one walked miraculously without hazard. All body-weight had disappeared. The mind was freed, and free. This plaza seemed not a town square. It was a plain formed by the flow of all roads of the world leading towards Paris, open shelter to the never-ending revolt of the contemporary spirit.

But was the Obelisk, although originally dedicated to solar deities, a monument worthy to be its focal point? Was it not an Egyptian importation from Luxor by Mohamed Ali Pasha to Louis Philippe, just as other monoliths had been carried off by Roman Emperors?

Yes, it is decorative, but its content did not connect. So did not its predecessor: the equestrian statue of Louis XV by Bouchardon. It was destroyed by the people in 1792. Then came Monsieur Guillot's "Mobile," the Guillotine. It connected, all right. Between January 1793 and May 1795 more than 2800 people lost their heads; and the field was named "Place de la Concorde."

No. The Obelisk could not symbolize the spirit of "Concorde"; nor the guillotine.

Instead, I felt, a structure should rise to be host to a never-ending flow of people who come to mould the standards of their own time. From the middle of the plaza a ramp would rise slowly. It will wind its way up and up, and in ever-widening circles hover above until it reached a height overlooking the whole city. To support this spiral-in-space, four parabolic double arches rise with it. They too start near the center of the plaza and spread simultaneously upward. Once the very height is reached, they bend downward and set foot in four distant parts of the city. Within the crater thus formed by them, the spiral rests, touched tangently. Each of these arches serves also as a two-way carrier-track for aero-cars, in the manner of a funicular. Thus people are brought to and from four faraway centers of the city, and easily set off on each "floor" of the spiral cone. On the seventh floor-vector a highway crosses

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the structure on its course through the whole city and its suburbs. Normally used for speed-traffic, it serves as an endless stage for public events of local and national magnitude. Thus the whole town is transformed into one action-area and an integration of "building and inhabitants" becomes as organic as it is automatic. The lower floors are dedicated to shops, fairs and exhibitions: the higher ones to space-stages (in the middle of the open well) to be watched by the spectators from the higher ramps. As the higher floors widen considerably, they have a capacity for larger audiences, such as those of assemblies and sports. The very top of the the open spiral is closed, resulting in a vast circular floor for open-air games. The four arches rise higher than this last level to support seats and provide access for the audiences. Structurally, as can be deduced, the building is indeed "continuous" with contact for further extensions through its parabolic arches. A dynamo of continous activities, the "endless structure" winds its way in spiral ramps, and in its power of suction and ejection becomes the very expression of a living organism rather than a solid mass of Architecture.

In 1925 I adapted this correlation idea to the problem of a department store. I quote its description from "Contemporary Art and the Store" (Brentano's 1930):

"Project for a department store anchored to the ground only at the central axis, which includes elevator shafts, heating and cooling system. Glass encases the whole structure. The floors are circular and built on the spiral principles of a cork screw, so that passage is continuous from one floor to the other . . . free, equal distribution of traffic. . . . Centralized elevators much more accessible from all parts of the floor. . . . Shoppers will often walk down several floors without realizing it because of the slightness of the incline. The store becomes practically one continuous main floor. . . . Carrying out the tenets of "tensionism" in city planning, it will be joined by spans every third floor with surrounding buildings."

The twin-architects Le Corbusier and his associate Pierre Jeanneret designed the "Musée Mondial" in 1929 for Geneva, the seat of the League of Nations. The building is in a square-shaped spiral, rising from a wide base to a tip, in the proportion of a pyramid.* The entrance is at the top, to which elevators run up. In addition, the different levels are connected by staircases. The floor space is enlarged by throwing three widths of the spiral together, forming a large nave in continuity. The idea: to show the historical development of civilization.

In the first width archeological documents are shown, in the center the historical and in the third the lands in which the growth of the

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* "America Builds," by Neùtra, publ. 1930, shows project of an observation tower for autoists in spiral pyramid, designed by: Office of F. L. Wright.

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arts and sciences took place. Later the Musée Mondial became a center of the "Cité Mondial," a planned town for the seat of the League.

The newest addition (1945) to this type of structural projects comes from the Museum of Non-Objective Art of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, called The Modern Gallery. Its collection is to be housed in a seven story building in New York, closely located to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright.

I quote from the announcement:

"Starting in the theatre below the ground it would be easy to go in a wheel chair and come safely down again without undesired interruption. Or taking the fast ramps, concentrated in a tower on one side of the Grand ramp, visitors go quickly up and down. Elevator service is stationed at the center of this tower and is directly connected with the grand ramps at each level. Two plunger elevators are located at the center at each recurrent ramp level. The open center of the grand, central chamber, made by the ramps, is wider at the top than at the base by about twenty-four feet, and open to the sky but covered by a shallow glass dome shedding night-light as well as daylight. . . . The main structure is monolithic throughout, pre-stressed steel in high tension reinforcing high pressure concrete. The exterior and interior will be faced with polished marble-aggregate. The only exception in the greatly extended groundfloor surface which will be a continuous pavement of large marble slabs."

As seen in the illustration the spiral ramp-tower is held in place by the rectangle of the administration building which envelops it from two sides, leaving the other half open to the Avenue.

The collection of abstract and non-objective art was started in 1929 and contains some of the most charming paintings by Chagall ("Paris through the Window") and Kandinsky.

Said F. L. Wright: "They call the advanced ideas animating this art (for lack of a better name) non-objective painting. . . . A controversy, concerning what it represents, has raged down the ages—rages still. And we hope to see it rage to good effect here, at home, in the perennial struggle for the time, the place and the man."

Nautilus pompilius

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TRENDS IN EXHIBITIONS

In November the Bignou Gallery opened a Dali Exhibition, also publishing a two sheet Newspaper, Dali News: Monarch of the Dailies by Dali.

" . . . I decided this time to write all that I should like to read in the papers by myself."

The guinea-pig-role for testing profits which industry has assigned to contemporary art, is well documented in the following excerpt from his movie-column: "My movie agent . . . ordered a nightmare from me, by telephone. It was for the film *Spellbound*. They adore all that you are doing at the Selznick studio, but I want to caution you, for the moment they want to use you only in small drops. . . . I said: In order to create this impression, I will have to hang fifteen of the heaviest and most lavishly sculpted pianos possible from the ceiling of the ballroom, swinging very low over the heads of the dancers. These would be in exalted dance poses, but would not move at all, they would only be diminishing silhouettes in a very accelerated perspective, losing themselves in infinite darkness. . . . Some days after I went to the studios to film the scene . . . and I was stupefied at seeing neither the pianos nor the cut silhouettes . . . but right then someone pointed out to me some tiny pianos in miniature hanging from the ceiling and about 40 live dwarfs who, according to experts, would give perfectly the effect of perspective that I desired. *I thought I was dreaming* . . . Result: the pianos didn't at all give the impression of real pianos . . . for another expert imitated the shadows of the pianos with false shadows . . . and the dwarfs, one saw, simply, that they were dwarfs. In truth the Hollywood experts . . . have surpassed me."

Dali describes the latest style of his painting as being ". . . like a Chardin painted by Vermeer."

At Rosenberg Jean Hélion continues his metamorphosis from non-objective painting to realistic representation.

Dorothea Tanning will show her first stage décor in February. It is a setting for Rieti's new ballet "Night Shadow" with Balanchine's choreography for the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo.

The magazine *View* presented an Exhibition of the Fantastic in Modern Art, the same aspect it has championed since its start. With it the new Hugo Gallery was opened at East 55th Street. In the foreword of the catalogue Parker Tyler writes: "Irrefutably present on these walls is a maximum evidence that the militant role of the fantastic, the contradiction of routine, mechanical, rational experience, against which art has eternally set its face, continues in the hands of artists—hands which have transformed daydreams into concrete images."

F. J. K.

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Books

HOME IS WHERE ONE STARTS FROM

A HISTORY OF WESTERN PHILOSOPHY. *By Bertrand Russell. Simon & Schuster.* $5.00.

JUDGED AS a conventional history of philosophy, this book, in spite of individually admirable essays, is inferior to most of those already on the market. Judged in terms of Russell's stated purpose—"to exhibit philosophy as an integral part of social and political life"—it is a complete failure. These facts have been sufficiently indicated by some of the more immediate reviewers, and there seems no point in repeating.

What remains, and what alone and very much makes the book worth reading, is its expression, quite probably the last major expression, of Bertrand Russell, a fascinating human being and the most noted of living philosophers. The turn of a syllogism can, as well as a metaphor, reveal a soul; philosophies also, with the most impalpable of all mediums, are works of art.

By writing a history, Russell shows how remarkably lacking he is in the historical sense. He keeps his promise to give "more account of general history than is usually given by historians of philosophy." But the quantitatively large addition is not enough to make a history of philosophy historical. The many pages of social and political history might just as well be bound separately. He never discloses any but obvious and long known correlations between societies and their philosophies. There was no need for 900 new pages to tell us that Plato was impressed by Sparta, that medieval philosophy was linked to the Church, and that post-Renaissance thought has been greatly influenced by science.

It is curious, for example, to find not a sentence about the demonstrable historical connections between the medieval problem of "universals," on the one hand, and, on the other, Church dogma, Church organization, and, from the fourteenth century, the growth of nationalism and the capitalist commodity market. The references to "subjectivism" in modern formal philosophy hardly hint at its long development in so many areas of social experience: mysticism, Protestant doctrine and practice, the "individualist" position of the capitalist entrepreneur or the atomized "citizen" of a nation-state, the slow vast shift in literature and the other arts. Several chapters (not uninteresting in themselves) describe the growth of the power of the medieval papacy, which had little significant effect on philosophy; but nowhere does Russell consider possible relations between the medieval philosophers' "great chain of

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Being" and the social hierarchy of feudalism. The doctrine of "analogy," a key to the medieval mind and culture, is not even mentioned. The statement of interconnection between modern science and philosophies is left suspended; even such major root systems as those which ground so much epistemology in Galileo's preferred categories are unaccounted.

Russell's inability to think and feel historically turns some of the accounts of individual philosophies into rather silly cartoons. The chapter on Augustine is a painful example. "Next comes the question of pious virgins who were raped during the sack [of Rome]. There were apparently some who held that those ladies, by no fault of their own, had lost the crown of virginity. This view the Saint very sensibly opposes. . . . It is suggested that God permitted rapes because the victims had been too proud of their continence. . . . There is one proviso to the exculpation of virtuous women who are raped: they must not enjoy it. If they do, they are sinful." There are pages of this sort of thing as the essay on the philosopher who in all probability was, historically, the most influential that ever lived; and who, in any case, more fully than any other expresses the crisis between two civilizations. Russell, it is revealing to observe, treats seriously only Augustine's views on space and time—views of technical importance, possibly, to a practising metaphysician, but of almost no *historical* significance.

Nevertheless, Russell's lack of a historical sense is not altogether displeasing. The genetic and historical approach, nowadays a commonplace for school children, gets sometimes rather boring. Russell doesn't really feel that either he or other philosophers are in their writings and careers expressions of social relations or psychic impulses. In his *History,* which is not a history, he is meeting his peers, his friends and rivals, at a timeless symposium, arguing over the port in the senior common room, located perhaps in a wing of that Noble Castle which Dante, by his sole gracious gesture, provides even in eternal Hell for the *spiriti magni.*

At its best, the record is lively and even charming. How cross Russell gets at a bad argument, or worse still, a refusal to argue at all. How pleased he occasionally is to be able to agree with a contemporary of two thousand years ago, to give him, sometimes, a friendly pat for a good try with insufficient material. How absurd, from a historical point of view, to get into a rage because Socrates or Augustine or Hegel or Bergson responds so sensitively to his own time and his own psyche. But how refreshing to see rejected that devaluation of all values which is the result of extreme historicism.

Russell knows, I suppose, that the implications of parts of his own analyses of logic and meaning require the dismissal of all or almost all the great philosophical problems as cognitively meaningless. "Between theology and science there is a No Man's Land, exposed to attack from

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both sides; this No Man's Land is philosophy." But he knows also that these are "almost all the questions of most interest to speculative minds." That they *are,* and that they are worth being curious and ultimately concerned about, is a primary axiom of his moral being. With his life-long insistence on the non-human, indeed superhuman, objectivity of truth, Russell has been the most pious of atheists: "In all this [the instrumentalist and similar theories of truth] I feel a grave danger, the danger of what might be called cosmic impiety. The concept of 'truth' as something dependent upon facts largely outside human control has been one of the ways in which philosophy hitherto has inculcated the necessary element of humility. When this check upon pride is removed, a further step is taken on the road towards a kind of madness."

But admission to this senior common room is not as carefully checked as at a Cambridge college. Strangers are there; they have refused to wear their gowns; they have spilled the port, and turned to more fiery flasks; they have no manners, and they shout out *their* truths without benefit of ordered premises. It is to exorcise them, to persuade himself they do not even exist, that Russell draws on his full armory— his logical subtlety, the appeal to impersonal evidence, his wit, disgust, contempt, and fear. The gentleman, who accepts the rules, is in a room with the declassed; the brigadier confronts the Indonesian natives. Rousseau, Augustine, Bergson, Nietzsche, the renegade Byron ("It is on the Continent that Byron was influential, and it is not in England that his spiritual progeny is to be sought"), the myth-making Plato. "If I had to choose between Thomas Aquinas and Rousseau, I should unhesitatingly choose the Saint." Of course. How could that bright rationalism look with anything other than horror at Plato's dark myths, Augustine's passion, Bergson's scorn of reason, at the shameless secrets of the heart which Rousseau so shamelessly exposes? Pascal, in Russell's *History,* becomes just a contemptuous footnote—dismissing as "quite in Rousseau's style" that phrase (given in a bad translation) which tells more than half a dozen academic philosophies: *Le coeur a ses raisons, que la raison ne connait pas.*

For what comes out in the end wonderfully clear from this book is that Russell is English, an English gentleman, legitimate heir of English thought and English life. *Finis enim totius motus est principium sui*— as Eliot adapts it, "In my end is my beginning." Russell rejoins his roots. The days of the sowing of paradoxes are over; no more of the iconoclasm that leads to ousting from the University, and jail for opposition to a war. In the new war, Russell upholds his country, its values and his; he accepts the title; Cambridge receives back its son who was dead, and is alive again; and in the month of this book's publication, he rises in the House of Lords to defend his historical, as in this book he defends his intellectual, heritage.

For an Englishman, a philosophy cannot be "an imaginative and

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poetic view of the world." In the essay on Bergson, Russell notes such a possible appreciation to brush it instantly aside. Philosophy is a serious business, a moral business, and the wild men must be not contemplated or aesthetically enjoyed or even understood, but condemned. Our day is proving openly enough how much closer are the dark myths than the bright syllogisms to the springs of human action. That, in part, is why Russell seems now old-fashioned, and why he seems not less but more humanly attractive than when he was as in the past either a great logician or a superficial iconoclast. Russell and his values are on the defensive, at the last defenses. Nearing the end of his career, he is forced back to the original and inherited base: to Hume—Hume's matter of fact empiricism, not his radical skepticism; to the inelegant but plain humanity of the utilitarians; to distrust of "subjectivistic madness" and objectivistic "holism"; to John Locke, for all his logical errors; to checks and balances and the piecemeal; to civil rights and the middle road between power and anarchy; to the Revolution of 1688, "the most moderate and the most successful of all revolutions." Russell returns to his roots, in his philosophical values as in his actions. His philosophy turns out to be indeed "an integral part of social and political life," part exactly of England.

England is very far from the best, but it is almost the best that there has been. Unfortunately, England, and thus Russell's philosophical values as well as his country, are being pounded by a tide that even the cliffs of Dover and the traditions of 600 years do not seem able to withstand much longer.

JAMES BURNHAM

PROFESSIONAL LITERARY REBEL

THE MEMOIRS OF A SHY PORNOGRAPHER. *By Kenneth Patchen. New Directions.* $3.00.

IT USED to be rumored that the slick magazines instructed their writers to pad their stories with descriptions of elegant homes, expensive food, clothing and automobiles, in order to stimulate an appetite for the commodities displayed in the advertisements. For this work the magazines needed professionals who knew their business so thoroughly that conformity was second nature. In much the same way, Kenneth Patchen is the professional literary rebel. He can always be depended upon to deliver the goods in accordance with definite specifications. First there are the "fascinating" chapter titles: Does The Famous Detective Know That Love In A Mist Is Only The Great White Whale Going Down For

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The Full Count In That Old Seventh Round? Then there is the obligation to make a book appear interesting and unusual, a condition achieved by asterisks, dots and dashes, capricious use of bold type, and a judicious measure of pages in which all the paragraphs contain only one sentence. True, *The Memoirs of a Shy Pornographer* has not half so many typesetting thrills as Patchen's *Journal of Albion Moonlight*. The marginal notes and bewitching drawings have been discarded, the pages aren't broken up quite so daringly; but this new book can still be identified as the real article. One has only to glance at it to see that Patchen remains the supreme hack of the "shock" writers. There is no scarcity of those spine-tingling reflections we associate with his name. (What does it mean to live! . . . What does it mean to die! . . . Who made the world this way!)

The Memoirs of a Shy Pornographer concerns itself with Albert Budd, the author of an apparently innocent novel which, by a little doctoring from two fantastic literary agents, becomes a notorious piece of under-the-counter pornography. The agents employed a simple and humorous device. Whenever a word such as "kiss" appeared it was replaced by four asterisks, on the reasonable assumption that the reader will think an omitted word a bad one. Albert then sets out on his adventures: he becomes a private detective, goes to some barbaric parties, falls in love with a crippled girl named Priscilla, and ends up in heaven. On the title page the author describes the book as an amusement and it does contain a certain number of quite funny situations and lines. The straight dialogue is often excellent, particularly when it is based on Patchen's good knowledge of American slang. However, the author is anything but master of the pun, as "Oh, you phallus are all alike" will bear witness. When he assails mystery stories, the great love affair, and other obvious aspects of contemporary foolishness, his comic skill is considerable. On the other hand, such gifts as he has are too often sacrificed for dull, surrealist whimsy in which the images and situations have so little relevance to life they might be exchanged for a thousand others. In addition, Patchen suffers profoundly from a Messianic complex—that inevitable occupational disease of the self-conscious literary rebels. Sanctified, boyish evangelists are not likely to become good satirists; instead, they make first-rate sentimentalists.

The author and his publisher seem to be under the impression that *The Memoirs of a Shy Pornographer* is bold, challenging and iconoclastic. Out of the twenty-three questions designed to lure the prospective buyer, a few quotes will suffice. We are asked: Do you really want the truth? Are you satisfied with the state of (a) World Society (b) your soul (c) American writing? Have you ever wondered what it would be like to be really alive? After this audacious beginning we are disappointed to find that what we have is only the iconoclasm of the Great

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Greenwich Village Revolutionaries and the nightmare doesn't seem much more unconventional than the early Edna St. Vincent Millay. If one stripped this book of its affectations, the best in it would be closer to James M. Cain than to Henry Miller and the humor more reminiscent of S. J. Perelman and his ingenious burlesque of our advertisement culture than of James Joyce. The latter is mentioned because from time to time the reader feels Joyce's ghost hovering over Mr. Patchen, but so far they have been unable to establish contact.

ELIZABETH HARDWICK

THE TEST OF UTOPIA

GERMANY IS OUR PROBLEM. *By Henry Morgenthau, Jr. Harper and Brothers.* $2.50.

IT IS very fortunate for human guinea pigs that few social Utopias are tested by events. In recent history there has been one important exception: the attempt, namely, to reorganize a defeated Germany and create a lasting peace. But it was not publicized. When, through an indiscretion, some of the specifications of this blueprint for Germany leaked out and a heated debate was started, it was officially stated that there was no such plan for dealing with Germany.

Only a year has passed and we now learn not only that there was such a plan, but also that its author is none other than Mr. Henry Morgenthau, who assures us that his plan was really the directive of the Big Three. In fact, Mr. Morgenthau presents some impressive evidence: a facsimile of the hitherto denied Morgenthau plan in its original form, a "top secret" memo taken by Mr. Roosevelt to the Quebec Conference. We have also learned from Drew Pearson that a memo signed by Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill on September 15, 1944, in Quebec, contained a good part of the Morgenthau memo, above all, the idea of the pastoralization of Germany. We also know that partitioning was envisaged as early as Teheran, while the conversion of Eastern Germany into a purely agrarian province was decided on at Yalta. And should there still be any doubt about the connection between the Morgenthau plan and the Potsdam agreement—after the tri-partite decisions had been put into effect by the conquering Russian armies—Mr. Morgenthau has republished the Potsdam declaration to prove it.

In fairness to him it should be said that his prescription has been followed completely only by the surgeon in the East. The Russians have not only removed the heavy industries of the East—plus almost everything portable—but they have also cut off East Prussia, Southern Silesia,

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and all of Eastern Germany. The Allied doctors, on the other hand, have not yet dissected the Ruhr nor amputated heavy industry in Western Germany, but a balance has been reached through over-application in the East and under-application in the West, making the treatment of defeated Germany a real test, at least of the workability of those principles common to the Big Three. And there can be no doubt that Mr. Morgenthau's scheme is the basic Allied panacea for preventing another German aggression by drastically reducing Germany's productive power through dismemberment, de-industrialization and the imposition, for an indefinite time, of a semi-colonial regime.

Thus our Utopia has undergone a real test. We do not need any more abstract arguments. We can see the complete breakdown of Germany, and the problems of "occupation" have reached a critical stage. Not only are the German people in a state of indescribable misery—which some regard as a just retribution—but the occupying armies themselves are now threatened with disease and demoralization. The result, today, is a feverish search by the responsible leaders of the occupation for some makeshift formula to prevent a complete catastrophe.

Three sessions of the House of Commons have violently protested the "unnecessary cruelties" of the Eastern German evacuation, and pointed to the German disease spreading all over Europe and across the Channel. One finds Winston Churchill and Ernest Bevin, co-authors of the Utopia, among those who are now worried by its effects. On November 15, Marshal Zhukov called an emergency conference of the "Beamten" cabinet of his zone, wining and dining them, and solemnly promising the end of reprisals, removals, promising even the return of some of the confiscated industry to enable the Germans to "work for Russian reparations." This was a complete reversal of the original idea of not having the Germans work for reparations. In Washington, orthodox followers of the Morgenthau plan are constantly clashing over ways of making the Potsdam decisions workable and thus saving the credit of the American Army of occupation. And, the Big Three are now all urging the immediate restoration of German economy, the loosening up of the division into water-tight zones and the setting up of a central German "Beamten" cabinet with enlarged responsibility.

The reason for all this is that the Morgenthau cure has turned out not only to be fatal for the patient but extremely dangerous for doctors and nurses. Six months after the defeat, production is down to the sub-level of five percent of capacity, and for several years to come it is hardly expected to be raised considerably, except in "Potemkin Village" presentation. The German people are either living on the pitiful stocks on hand or on relief, and are officially described as undernourished and disease-ridden. They are lethargic troglodites in the vast slum which even after years of bombing and tremendous losses was still, toward the end of

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the war, a pretty productive area compared with today. Their greatest problem, aside from food, fuel, shelter, clothing, is the uncertainty of where, how, on what level to start again from scratch. Scarcely one million of the uprooted Easterners can be settled on farms made available through land reforms. For years to come Germany will have to buy about 50 per cent of her food supply. For that she will have to produce; and the very machinery that has been taken from her may have to be re-imported.

All of this could have been foreseen by any American who did not lose his sense of reality in spite of his justifiable horror at the atrocities committed by Hitler's Germany. But as against any such common-sense point of view there was Mr. Morgenthau's Utopia. Hardly ever has a panacea discredited itself in so short a time.

Mr. Morgenthau is still crusading for his plan; his book had already become a historical document on the day of publication. It could perhaps be called a catechism of steps which should have been avoided. For generations to come it will serve as a text-book for the study of the compromises and confusions of the liberal mind.

I do not blame Mr. Morgenthau for the failure. His plan is indeed a collective Big Three product. It contains Ehrenburg's and Vansittart's racial interpretation of German history, reflecting old Russian nationalism and vindictiveness, and the Hun-hunting of the Church of England. Morgenthau's special contribution is his assertion that it is based on reason and justice, and not on hatred of the Germans. This rationalization could simply be called hypocrisy. It is based on strategic ideas, technical plans and statistics, provided by sections of the FEA, of the Treasury and committees like the Kilgore Committee, which smell very much like the Eastern mystique of statistical planning and practical ruthlessness in achieving one's aims. In other words, it is a concept which had its origin at Teheran and Yalta and Eastern market-minded big business men, rather than in Mr. Henry Morgenthau's studies for the Quebec memorandum. There is no need today to point out that its most Utopian aim is the democratization of the Germans, who certainly need a chance for a genuine democratization. And it is not difficult to discover that during the time of the application of the plan more friction has been created among the Big Three and more disappointment among the smaller members of the United Nations than any pessimist could possibly have predicted. And finally, it has helped American reactionaries, who call the plan "insane" and vindictive, to appeal to a large number of people who would otherwise have followed a genuinely liberal foreign and domestic policy. The Utopia, in short, shows where American bourgeois liberalism ends when it forgets its own background and traditions, and its own potential strength.

PAUL HAGEN

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POETRY CHRONICLE

A MAN AGAINST TIME. *By William Ellery Leonard. Appleton-Century.* $2.00.

TRIBUTE TO THE ANGELS. *By H. D. Oxford.* $2.00.

AMERICAN CHILD. *By Paul Engle. Random House.* $2.00.

THE CLOTH OF FLESH. *By Seán Jennett. Faber & Faber.* 6s.

FIVE RIVERS. *By Norman Nicholson. Dutton.* $2.00

SPRINGBOARD. *By Louis MacNeice. Random House.* $1.75.

SHORT IS THE TIME. *By C. Day Lewis. Oxford.* $2.25.

LITTLE FRIEND, LITTLE FRIEND. *By Randall Jarrell. Dial.* $2.00.

THESE NEW books are svelte, the jackets gay, the prices high, the publishers demure, and everything should be fine. We shall see. But since nothing but confusion would be served by considering these writers as a group—the War Poets (who isn't?), the Neo-Atomists: *Tema con variazioni*—, I shall discuss them in no particular order, and leave the generalization to you. Let us begin with the dead.

The late Mr. Leonard's *A Man Against Time* makes me want to shorten the proverb to *De mortuis nil,* but I suppose one must say something. It is a sonnet sequence, and a damned embarrassing one. The 'I' of the poem is a man of 57 married to a girl of 24 (though the 57 seems 97 and the 24, 16), which is a theme of respectable lineage, and there is something even Chaucerian in the simplicity of 'Naked you make my naked lap your bed, / White twenty-four in tawny fifty-seven'; but unless I am being helplessly vulgar myself, there is something more than unhealthy in the poet's obsession with nudity and senility. Certainly the image of an onanistic Aphrodite (sonnet xxxvi) is in ghastly bad taste; and though Lucretius, Vergil, Dante, Milton and Goethe are all condescendingly invoked in one sonnet (lx), I think that only Lucretius would reply: *Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum,* when the *religio* is merely inguinal itching. For the rest, the sonnets, are an extended cliché of rant and rhetoric. 'It is rare,' Mr. William Rose Benét comments, 'that so unusual a manuscript is found unpublished after the death of a distinguished writer.' I hope that Mr. Benét is right.

A kind of dithering slickness gleams from H.D.'s latest work, a mystical effluvium called *Tribute to the Angels.* Using as symbols the flowering of a blasted tree and the alchemical fashioning of a jewel, she elaborates the familiar paradox of I. Cor. XV:36, *That which thou*

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sowest is not quickened, except it die. London at war is the place of martyrdom *par excellence*: 'Never in Rome, / so many martyrs fell; // not in Jerusalem, / never in Thebes, // so many stood and watched / chariot-wheels turning, // saw with their very eyes, / the battle of the Titans, // saw Zeus' thunderbolts in action / and how from giant hands, // the lightning shattered earth / and splintered sky, nor fled // to hide in caves, / but with unbroken will, // with unbowed head, watched / and though unaware, worshipped. . . .' (All of which is tearing-the-cat for 'Big raid last night. No, we didn't go to the shelter. It was interesting, even impressive, to watch.') The gate of death is the only gateway to life, for mortal life is but 'this temporary eclipse.' This somewhat battered Platonism is decked out in gauds filched from all sorts of places: the dominant image of Our Lady is drawn from uneasy memories of *Ash Wednesday* (even to the turning of the stair!), *The Blessèd Damozel,* and Poe's *To Helen*; there are altars, candles, crucibles, damasks and figured brocades, Angels, Archangels (including two whom I had never met before: one gets about so little!), Thrones, Principalities, and Powers—and, rather astonishingly in the midst of this mediaeval rummage sale, an electric clock with an illuminated dial. Not that there is anything inherently wrong with this mystical apparatus: *Ash Wednesday,* to go no further, has shown us what can be done with it; but H.D. simply can't make it work. There is no conviction, only a great deal of pretty gesturing. The passage that I have quoted is as successful as anything in the poem, but how tired, how perfunctory it is! These tame allusions to Titans and Thunderbolts, this 'shattered' earth, this 'splintered' sky! When no such particularity is attempted, the verse degenerates into muddy bombast: images run together, phrases hang uncompleted, and even the syntax decays. The bold misuse of the comma —observable above after the words 'eyes' and 'hands'—adds its own woozy charm to the effect—of what? Of incantation, presumably; but it is the incantation of a seer without a vision. High Mass with the Canon left out. . . . It used to be fashionable to speak of H.D.'s chiselled phrases, and in many of her early imagist poems she did achieve a certain elegance. But one cannot be Greek by an act of will alone. Her translation of the *Iôn* of Euripides chiselled the text almost out of existence, and *Tribute to the Angels* presents the unrewarding spectacle of a chiseller working in lard.

Mr. Paul Engle's sonnet sequence about his little daughter raises questions of intention and taste that I cannot answer. The Child is one of those hazardous subjects that automatically release the easiest, as well as the finest, emotions, and it is to Mr. Engle's credit that he has managed to avoid the stickiest pitfalls. Yet everything about the book, even its undeniably charming format, seems designed to beguile the reader,

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to enlist his co-operation not by the power of poetry, but by all kinds of extraneous and irrelevant appeals. One does not have to be a King Herod to detect something false in this paedolatry and to reject it. The error is the Wordsworthian assumption for infancy of preterhuman meaningfulness, and it is essentially an act of sentimentalization: for the child is not simply loved and enjoyed for its own delightful sake, but is converted into a Mighty Prophet!, Seer Blest! for grown-ups to tell their fortunes by.

As a sonneteer Mr. Engle is hampered by his own fluency. His is not Sidney's 'sweet sliding fit for a verse,' but an ambling trot:

She is a part of that world, though in play,
That lives when tin or golden trumpets speak:
Boy Blue found sleeping on the field of hay,
Or Roland plundered on the bloody peak.

'Though in play,' quotha! News if it were not! This is padding—what the Spanish call *ripio*—, and it comes so naturally to Mr. Engle's hand that he can compose entire octaves and sestets of it. Easy and pretty. The sequence is easy and pretty, too: pretty talk on a pretty subject by a pretty mind. But it aimed at more.

I am more nearly convinced by Mr. Seán Jennett, whose *The Cloth of Flesh* contains poems of a slow seriousness. His most appealing characteristic, though it is also a dangerous one, is the honesty with which he risks the commonplace. Frequently it is as though he were saying. There is nothing novel here, nothing extraordinary, but it is important; it has all been said before, and it cannot be said too often. So, in "The Quick':

But that loud politician, ranting right,
look out for him, for he is totally blind
among the one-eyed and the cataracts,
and his way leads to hell:
not only now,
but, as for our fathers, after our time,
when the child we have conceived in love
shall grow to manhood in a world at war.

I find it both just and moving; yet no one could deny that the idea is an ordinary one, and it is interesting to note that the poet dares the challenge, as it were, by the ordinariness of his diction: *loud* politician; when the child we have *conceived in love* shall *grow to manhood* in a *world at war*. The perils of this manner are plain enough, and it is true that Mr. Jennett indulges rather more than his share of *longueurs*. It is then that he tries for life by marrying an adjective to each noun, by flirting with the colloquial dissonances of Auden, and so forth. But when something is really happening—as in

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the poem which I have cited, in 'Andromeda and Perseus,' 'My Subtle and Proclamant Song,' 'Cycle,' and three or four more— he speaks with authority. 'My living lips rest / with the vision, utter nonsense and / sucked platitude. I am dumb with the song,' is too harshly self-critical. Some kinds of dumbness can be eloquent.

Mr. Norman Nicholson interests me very much. He is a West of England man and a sturdy regionalist; a Blakean mystic, a landscape-prophet with more than a drop of Wordsworth in his veins; and his poetry is as rugged as the screes and becks and rowans and ghylls that he celebrates. It is too rugged, at times, for my outland taste: these same screes and ghylls—particularly the screes, which turn up again and again in his pages, like the kestrels in the early Auden-Spender-Lewis-Warner poetry—, get between me and the poems. But I shall not press the objection. What is important is that, screes or no screes, Mr. Nicholson has written a respectable number of nature lyrics that challenge the best of their kind. His Cumberland, at once harsh and soft, wild and ordered, finds admirable expression in these poems whose texture is so rough, whose depths so gentle. The method is a familiar one, though it has gone out of fashion in our day: the natural scene—the River Duddon, Eskmeals, S. Bees—is described in terms that lead to what our fathers knew as the Moral, the Wordsworthian cognition of the meaning beneath

The forthy blossom on the rowan and the reddening of the berries,
The silt, the sand, the slagbanks and the shingle,
And the wild catastrophes of the breaking mountains—

an act of Natural Piety, alien to our impatient time, but one that we should do well to recultivate for our souls' good. I am aware that what I am saying raises up the glum classroom ghosts of *Thanatopsis* and *Tintern Abbey* (but *Tintern Abbey* should not be read in the classroom, and *Thanatopsis* should not be read anywhere), and I certainly do not mean to imply that Mr. Nicholson is stuffy. Only in his method does he resemble the earlier connoisseurs of fringed gentians, chambered nautiluses and corned cauliflowers; one must really go back as far as Clare for a comparable power of simple irradiation. (He has none of the Hopkins ecstasy.) Yet he is not reactionary: he is writing of our predicament, he is addressing us. A typical example is the second strophe of 'Bombing Practice':

The fells are purple and blurred in the haze above the marshes;
The gulls float like bubbles.
Plovers band together with white bellies
Square into the wind;
A curlew flies crying along the gullies;
A faint rainbow of oil is clogged in the thin rushes.

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A faint rainbow of oil. . . . The observation is exact, yet strange in its context with the strangeness of any mechanistic intrusion upon natural serenity—which, of course, is the theme of the poem. The oil-spot is a symbol informed with the whole tragic meaning of the poem, and for me it is more powerful than the image in the rather conventional closing lines which lament that things so beautiful as the bombers

Shall fall through nights of winter gales
And plant their germs of pain in the limbs of men.

Mr. Nicholson's technic is defective. He is fond of the four-stress couplet, but his control of it is insecure: it gets away from him, galloping off for all the world like the One-hoss Shay, when there is nothing in his matter to justify the frivolous rhythm. He is too much given to alliterative assonance: teach / marsh, tick / rock, lore / fear, and (horribly) bud / God. It smacks of laziness. And, finally, he does not handle the long poem nearly so well as the short lyric. But when one has made these exceptions, with a farewell salute to the all-encompassing screes, there still remains an unpretentious, wholesome body of poetry by a serious man who knows where he is going.

Louis MacNeice's new book is a disappointment, although anyone who has followed his career for the last ten years must have been increasingly conscious that the high promise of the early poems and the *Agamemnon*—the best translation of Aeschylus that I have ever read—was not being fulfilled. There was a tension, a controlled warring of energies, in his first work that has been relaxing steadily ever since, so that now, in *Springboard*, it beats with a merely facile movement. The strangeness of accent that signalized the fine 'Eclogue at the Five-Barred Gate,' to cite only one poem, is domesticated here. It has become a trademark, a trick. The lilting rhythms, one half of the oxymoron which was Mr. MacNeice's most personal device, come all too easily:

Long fingers over the gunwale, hair in a hair-net,
Furs in January, cartwheel hats in May,
And after the event the wish to be alone—
Angels, goddesses, bitches, all have edged away:
O leave me easy, leave me alone.

It has style, it is good; but there is that air of flippant neatness, of must-we-go-into-all-this-again, that marks the machine-made poem. Which criticism I should extend to the book as a whole.

If only, (you think) he were not so damned competent, if he would not write so much. . . . May it not be that the mining evil is this very fluency that suggests the society wit never at a loss for something apt to say? the kind of poet who could compose a delicious motto for the collar (collars?) of Cerberus himself? I am not trying to be malicious, but to account for the fact, which disheartens me, that a poet who can write

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'The Casualty' and 'Whit Monday' and 'Thyestes' in this collection, and who has written perhaps a dozen fine pieces elsewhere, is capable of so much dog. It must be confessed, though, that these specious effects, hollow as they are, provoke less impatience than such religio-philosophical exercises as 'Prayer Before Birth' and 'The Kingdom.' These are Mr. MacNeice in a new vein, and an incongruous vein it is. The 'Prayer' has every appearance of being intended seriously, yet its pseudo-liturgical diction and the cumulative pomposity of its versification make it sound like a cruel parody. The same air obtains in 'The Kingdom,' though for a different reason. This poem celebrates the inoffensive, unimportant people *quorum est regnum caelorum*; the drawback seems to be not that the poet is insensitive to the value of these people, for he clearly is not, but that the mask of cynicism which he has worn so long cannot in a moment be put off. The result is disturbing. One walks through 'The Kingdom' like King Agag, delicately, expecting to be hewn asunder at any moment by the ax of satire. The poet seems to feel the same uneasiness, and altogether the Kingdom is distinctly not of this world. Or, when it descends to such lisping as

Everything in that house was mutually possessive:
She was Our Mother, Dad was called Our Dad,
Connie Our Connie and the cat Our Tiger,

of any world that I want to know. It is too early as yet to pronounce the Wyrd of Wyrds over Louis MacNeice: there is evidence in *Springboard* that he is still poetically alive. But the ghosts are gathering around him, and disconcertingly they are the ghosts of his own poems.

The poetry of Cecil Day Lewis has lost the revolutionary fervor that blazed in his early work. He is, in a sense, disillusioned. The political faith that his group held in the early '30s has had to be abandoned, and the poet who once campaigned with a confidence that bred slogans as often as poetry can now write

It is the logic of our times,
No subject for immortal verse—
That we who live by honest dreams
Defend the bad against the worse.

Yet this is not the kind of disillusionment that kills. The political attitudes, characterized by sweeping, mechanistic conceits, have been replaced by a narrower but deeper preoccupation with the individual. The problem is no longer social, but moral. This does not imply a retreat from actuality. Mr. Lewis has never been more aware than he is in these recent poems of private responsibility for the ordering of the public mess:

Each man died for the sins of the whole world:
For the ant's self-abdication, the fat-stock's patience
Are sweet goodbye to human nations.

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But where once he knew all the answers, he is less certain now. The urgency of the questions is underscored by his hesitation. And although he is being unfair to himself when he says

Lost the archaic dawn wherein we started,
The appetite for wholeness: now we prize
Half-loaves, half-truths—enough for the half-hearted,

it is true that he has learned the kind of humility that I find, less moving because less difficultly won, in Norman Nicholson. The program of action stated in 'Self-criticism and Answer' may not be world-shaking; but it might very well become man-making, which I take to be a higher thing. 'Nothing is innocent now but to act for life's sake,' he writes elsewhere. To act.

In the act of decision only,
In the hearts cleared for action like lovers naked
For love,

speculation and theory seem as irrelevant as games. The 'endemic guilt' must be purged away; and in the face of this terrible necessity, when

Your politicians pray silence
For the ribald trumpeter,
The falsetto crook, the twitching
Unappeasable dictator,

contemplation is too dear an indulgence. The necessary act is self- recognition, the willingness to 'risk the javelin dive / And pierce reflection's heart, and come alive.' Nothing is promised; on the contrary, Mr. Lewis, once so sanguine, seems to have become what Koestler calls a 'short-term pessimist,' hopeful perhaps of ultimate good, but concerned chiefly with the immediate evil. His contempt is good for us because it is directed against those perfunctory virtues of ours which we take for granted: our liberalism, our tolerance, our easy faith in ourselves as enlightened people.

Technically these new poems are as competent as the old. It is easy in reading Mr. Lewis to be fooled by the apparently effortless versification and the down-to-earth quality of the diction. Of course he has his lapses: read his poem on Lidice, which is better than Miss Millay's whooping-among-the-ruins only because there is less of it. But he is a conscious and even elaborate technician. Indeed, the most ambitious poem in this book—'The Nabara,' a narrative of the Spanish Civil War—is ruined by virtuosity: the long stanzas, the intricate rimes, the loving embellishments of the poet's craft, paralyze the action; the poem is an expensive failure. But this is exceptional. In general the poems are highly wrought and cast in a variety of forms—there are even some good Sapphics on page 88—, and at their best (as in the sonnet sequence 'O Dreams, O Destinations') I do not see how they could be improved.

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And finally, Mr. Randall Jarrell. Of the new generation of American poets there are few whom I should set ahead of him—probably only one, Mr. Robert Lowell. Mr. Jarrell is extraordinarily gifted, as *Blood for a Stranger* proved three years ago. The new poems, nearly all of them dealing with the war, are an extension of range and a toughening. He seems less brittly nervous than he did; whereas the first book was explosive, the vigor of fragmentation, *Little Friend, Little Friend* shows an increasing power to sustain and develop: witness the firm line of '2nd Air Force,' unbroken from beginning to end, and the harmonious shaping of the great strophe in 'Siegfried.' And he is capable, thank God!, of a wise silliness. 'The State' is a gag, all right:

When they took my cat for the Army Corps
Of Conservation and Supply,
I thought of him there in the cold with the mice
And I cried, and I cried, and I wanted to die . . .

but it is laughter that comes very close to the *lachrymae rerum*—how close, one may perceive by comparing it with another poem in a far different key, 'The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner.' The poems play back and forth upon one another: the helpless anonymity hosed out of the turret is the scared anonymity in his dwindling house, the giggle and the nightmare combine in a moral judgment that is as bitter as it is hopeless. 'Each man died for the sins of the whole world'; but Mr. Jarrell's *Qui tollis* is a desolate one, as rayless as his book's beautiful epigraph:

. . . *Then I heard the bomber call me in: 'Little Friend, Little Friend, I got two engines on fire. Can you see me, Little Friend?'*

I said 'I'm crossing right over you. Let's go home.'

But even if this is all, and home turns out to be only another version of the ball turret, the perception is in itself a kind of catharsis. And there is something to be said for a mapped damnation.

Oh very well, sure, I'll agree that there is too much ebullience, that the gaga of 'The Boyg, Peer Gynt, the One Only One,' like the dada of 'Mother, Said the Child,' should have remained in the notebook. A man who can write that single line about air-force armorers in their faded green:

And the green, made beasts run home to air,

with the immense implications of that Tacitean 'made,'—such a man has no right to splash as boisterously as he does. And so forth. But I cannot, in all honesty, find anything seriously wrong here. This is an intelligent, tragic, witty, profoundly tender book. *Ad multos annos.*

DUDLEY FITTS

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A NOVELIST OF THE ABSURD

L'ETRANGER. *By Albert Camus. Gallimard.* Paris, 1942.

ONE MIGHT well hesitate whether to translate the title of this little tale by Albert Camus as The Stranger or The Alien. One would probably choose Alien as meaning one who, unlike a mere stranger, is a foreign person who may become well known but with whom there will always be at some point a blank wall never to be surmounted. Much of the irony of the book is foreshadowed in this title; for it is a factual account of a man, *moyen sensuel,* whom we have all met and who remains alien to all who have touched him closely. There is nobody, in a sense, more average than this Meursault; and one of the book's indictments lies in the fact that such a man should ever be so quietly regarded. He is the man in the street whose reactions are reduced to the intelligent minimum. One must insist on the intelligence of the prototype. It is not only evident in the story, but is important in the double moral that shows how society wastes such a man; and how little intelligence serves a person who lacks so signally, one starts to say, belief, but one might as well say vitality.

This is then the tale of a man whose mother dies in an old peoples' home, who gets into bad company because he doesn't care what kind of company he is in, who gets himself a girl with a nice laugh, who is kind to an old man, who has no ambition in his work although he works well, who kills a man because it is so hot. He is condemned to the guillotine because, as one makes it out, he didn't care enough about his work to try to advance in it and he didn't care enough not to kill a man. (The facts that the man killed was an Arab and the sun of African intensity appear to have no sociological connotation. The whole incident might as well have happened in France as in Algiers.) As Meursault puts it himself, he is condemned as a murderer because he didn't weep at his mother's funeral. His crime is that he didn't believe enough in society to fake emotions that he didn't feel. He is, of course, the product of that society which he ends by so flagrantly affronting. When his boss is urging him to go to Paris, he asks him if he doesn't want to change his life. "I answered that one never changes one's life, that anyway one life was worth as much as another and that I was quite satisfied with mine here." He later reflects that he used to have a good deal of ambition but that when he had to stop his studies he soon saw that such notions were of no importance. Yet, to pass over the primary guilt of society, one sees that it has a right to be outraged by Meursault. One cannot consent to be lived by life—consent to it openly, that is—and advance the business of civilization. If the man in the street has become the anti-bourgeois, descended from Hemingway's cafés to the streets of

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Jean Gabin and here developed nationally and fictionally, and in the work of Sartre as well—society's fear is understandable.

At the trial, when they are looking for character references in order to mitigate the sentence, who of his friends can speak for Meursault? "He was a man", says the restaurant keeper where he ate all his dinners. "You all know, I suppose, what a man is?" But precisely nobody knows what a man is and when they are confronted with one, they are horrified. To be accepted, one must act like an idea of a man. It is absurd —but, given the frail bases of civilization, it is also reasonable. Meursault's girl whom he had agreed to marry though he has told her he did not suppose he loved her—intelligent, he knew very well that love had never touched him—wails that they have turned her words against him when they were meant to be his succor. But her words themselves are against him, and so is she. She, too, had wanted the lie, had wanted him to *say* he loved her anyway and he wouldn't. "Marriage is a serious matter," she had urged him. And he had answered simply, "No." So, at the moment of pressure, his failure towards her helps condemn him—it doesn't need the brutal exaggerations of the district attorney—even though he was honest to fail and though she thought she had accepted his failure.

The beginning, the action of the story is told with an obstinate dead level calm. Almost as withering to read about as it must have been to live. And it is here that one questions the use of the first person. It attacks the character of the prototype that he should consent to describe himself as the victim of such a picayune régime. Without the vanity of any illusion, he reports that he worked well, that he enjoyed a swim, that he went to a movie, that he didn't like Sundays. The recital is alleviated only by the little moments of positive well-being that penetrate to Meursault and to the reader as a ray of watered sunshine might penetrate to the dim pasturage of fishes at the bottom of the sea. And when he says that the four pistol shots he fired into the body of the man he has already killed were like four short knocks on the door of misfortune, we understand that he has not been at any time positively miserable; therefore his life has been good, as one might judge such things.

It is in prison that he begins to live more energetically. In prison he remembers with moving directness the ends of days, the time of aperitifs and long shadows, the qualities of certain street noises that he would never experience again. The priest, a good priest—and all officialdom in the book is as good as one could expect, conscientious and convinced of the truth of its fabrications—comes to pray with him and he says he hasn't time to think about God. He simply isn't interested in Him. He wants to use his last hours remembering those few undramatic times when life had been positively charged. The only future life he could imagine, he tells the priest, is one in which he might remember

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this one. Finally exasperated, he is brought to an emotional pitch whereby he achieves his own absolution. He is not made greater by it, or better, he learns nothing new. Simply and powerfully, he becomes more conscious, aware of what he had never before bothered to state. He understands why he found the common concerns of man—marriage, ambition, worthy friends—of no importance, "not serious." In the midst of death, he reaches what is for him the heart of life—the fact that one breathes and lives he understands as so tremendous as to diminish every other consideration. Now he becomes positively charged and to the highest voltage of which he is capable. And his last energy is used to insist on and praise his humanity. From the depths of the future, from all those years he was to live came, he says, the breath of life which equalizes any way one might choose to put in the time. By being alive, he was therefore privileged, as all beings are privileged and as all beings are equal. And all condemned to lose their privilege. At the end, then, the book is a hymn in praise of life as it is lived.

In its brief career, it manages to be a good many other things as well. The double-image quality of life is constantly apparent—the conflict between the values of society and those of the individual. In this connection, perhaps the most reassuring element in the whole work is Camus' contentment with prose usage. He evidently finds people and the waking world adequate means to his quite sufficiently complicated ends.

KATHERINE HOSKINS

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Variety

Paul Valery (1871-1945)

PAUL VALERY would doubtless be very difficult to discuss as a poet, had he not denied the rights of the dunce and had he not united in himself the charm and the arrogance of the professor. He said to me one day: "Now that I belong to the Academy, I am going to bring in the rabble." By the rabble, he meant the true poets, those who disturb the class, hide alarm clocks under the desk, play dirty tricks regularly, and are dismissed from school for crimes of treason.

His straight line was tortuous. It meandered without a break and was straight only in essence. The precious serpent which entwined itself in its own folds liked to bite its tail and with ultimate malice shaped itself from time to time to the figure of zero.

For the pessimism of Valéry only expressed itself through a love of discipline and through discouraging the angelic soul by weighing it down with the dull and the boring.

His most serious study of the nocturnal world, the world in which the work of art is hatched, was always accompanied by those sardonic winks and insane laughs of the wicked pupil who, knowing himself capable of improvising in a moment what is a long toil for others, somehow passes above them and never takes their labor seriously: never did Valéry yield to that unfortunate poetic and historical glamor with which the future alone ought to concern itself and which makes ridiculous those who suppose it indispensable to their immediate visibility. Valéry was invisible and he remained invisible in a way to which the best of us cannot be compared, presenting an enigma to the countless readers who can only judge by making comparisons. After writing these lines, I heard in a fisherman's cabin the description on the radio of the funeral of Paul Valéry. The pomp, the procession, the torches, the Palais de Chaillot correspond so poorly to the background of fish nets, planks, herbs, and pine needles on this deserted and almost savage coast that Valéry appeared to me in his most human form.

During the funerals of the Countess de Noailles and of Giraudoux, I had already known as if with certainty that they would take me by the shoulder and lead me far from the church so that we might chat around a table. It is this aspect of Paul Valéry, so gay, so little possessed by solemnity, that rises in my mind while a slow and funereal voice pays tribute to him. He preferred most of all an intimate breakfast, the end of which was continually delayed. If he was in company, he knew how to reduce his hosts to the state of

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phantoms and only those whom he wished to hear preserved their natural size in his presence.

From an extreme fatigue which racked him, crept over him, wasted him from top to bottom, he ascended to an incomparable vivacity of eye, and of mustache.

Laughter broke open the depths of his soul. He was not afraid that his secrets would be discovered. Others would not be able to make use of them. He exposed and displayed good-naturedly the most profound recesses of his being. For a unique machinery operated in his speeches and in his conversation. One can say equally well that his speeches had the grace of his conversation and his conversation the singular foreshadowing of his speeches.

To the public, his work makes of him a piece of sculpture through which he endures. For us, a friend has been thrown overboard from the ship in which we make our journey together.

One of the great possessions of Paul Valéry was his innate and almost magical feeling for the right setting.

How many poets throw away their gifts in a disorderly manner, ignorant of how to make use of them! The Countess de Noailles was not the only one who *discovered* endlessly, and confused what she discovered through a total misconception of perspective and of values. When Paul Valéry *discovered* the trivial and the insipid, he found immediately, and by means of a method to which I pay homage, how to seek out the angle at which the best light is cast upon the subject. This phenomenon of the right setting is one of the fundamental secrets of poetry. By reading and rereading Malherbe, Racine, Mallarmé, Paul Valéry tracked down the formula of this secret. The magic potion which he gives to us drop by drop is composed of simple elements, but its strength—the strength of what is simple—is effective only in brews and doses.

One might write indefinitely about Paul Valéry, about his learning, his malice, his scepticism, which was that of an Encyclopedist, his naîveté, which was that of a school boy, and the prudence with which he took hold of and developed his experiences as an alchemist. But it is not appropriate for us to speak of these things. Others will do so. And they will call us *the salt of the earth.* It is for us to say farewell to him in a way of which he would have approved by quoting the letter from Paris in which Roger Lannes described his burial: "Few people were present. When Ronsard died, the funeral orator declared that his birth, in 1525, had been a compensation for the disaster at Pavia. Now, Valéry was born in 1871. But all has decayed. Poets and royal honors!"

JEAN COCTEAU

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Pilgrim to Philistia

IF Karl Shapiro's *Essay on Rime* (*Reynal & Hitchcock*. $2) were an isolated phenomenon, one could dismiss it simply as an unfortunate misadventure of a gifted young poet in a didactic genre he of all poets should never have attempted. But it is not isolated, and has therefore to be examined as the child of the *Zeitgeist* that it is. Shapiro seems determined to be a straw in every fashionable wind: here is the new distrust of the dissident intellectual, of science, of the critic, of the difficulty of modern literature; and here too the misty wind of the vague new religiosity. Stating that his purpose is to "help solidify / The layman's confidence in a plainer art," Shapiro has written what amounts to an attack on all of modern literature: another manifesto in the anti-modernist movement of organized Philistia. And its public will have its book. Already saluted in an inexplicable review by F. O. Matthiessen in the *Times Book Review,* it now needs only one of Mr. J. Donald Adams' inimitable Sunday morning sermons to be properly launched on its career as a club over the heads of other writers, over modern poetry generally.

After charging blithely through the modern confusions in metre, rhythm, rhetoric and language, Shapiro prepares to plunge in the last section of his poem at a more terrifying windmill: the whole intellectual situation of the modern writer. The reader, slightly winded from the previous demolitions, sits up again: here perhaps come the great deliverances, the resolving truths! After all, this section is labelled the modern "Confusion in Belief" (a confusion which arises, Shapiro thinks, fundamentally from the modern "failure in belief"), and shouldn't we expect that the man bold enough to pronounce the confusion and dissect the failure be able to restore order and successful functioning?

Shapiro attacks the modern poet for believing in, among other things, Psychoanalysis, Economics, Sociology, Freud, and Marx. Failure of belief! One would think this an excess, rather than a failure, in belief. But inconsistency is no hobgoblin to Shapiro's mind. The inconsistencies themselves would not matter so much if he were not dealing with a subject so large as the intellectual situation of modern man and showing himself at the same time incapable of ideas. It is not that Shapiro does not respond at all to ideas; he would not have been attracted otherwise into this intellectual jungle; there are good writers who are not touched at all by ideas, but Shapiro is not one of these. He is something much more impure: he responds to ideas, but he does not have them; what he has are half-ideas, vapors of ideas, approximations to ideas—to which inconsistency probably never struck him as particularly relevant, and perhaps isn't. Shapiro is attacking, of course, not a modern "failure in

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belief" generally, but, specifically, religious unbelief. What he is doing is to make use of one technique of confusion quite common among second-rate religious apologists—from whom he may unconsciously have picked it up: to speak of "Belief" and "Faith" in this vague and absolutely enveloping way so that our specific unbelief on one point is to be covertly saddled with the guilt of total skepticism.

The inconsistency of Shapiro's attitude towards modern literature is more significant than the various inconsistencies of his argument. He admires the literature he deplores (an attachment, which, if logical, would itself be a personal conflict) but he is unable to draw the necessary conclusions from the work of writers like Joyce or Eliot. Apparently, he has never asked himself why *The Waste Land* is written as it is, whether it could express all that Eliot meant it to if it had been written according to "the layman's confidence in a plainer art." Apparently he has never reflected over Eliot's criticism, and, in particular, the statement that modern poetry must be complex because modern life is complex. Shapiro seems to think that the difficulty and complexity of modern literature are something arbitrarily chosen in a vacuum rather than something forced upon the writer as soon as he tries to exist in his time and make his art adequate to his time. Which is not to deny, of course, that plenty of fake-modern literature is written in which the difficulty is arbitrary and forced. But there is something suspiciously over-squeamish in the flutter of alarm over the bad writing done by second-rate followers, who have always been, in any case, the price we must pay for the great: one suspects that the real uneasiness is directed towards the great figures themselves. Thus Shapiro persistently attacks Freud while professing to attack only his influence and followers, the fact that his ideas "have leaked out / Into the street." But if one knows anything at all about the ideas of Freud, one knows that they involve basic motives and modes of human life, and the pity is that they have not penetrated the general consciousness enough, that not enough of them *have* leaked out into the street. The important point, to come back to the literary again, is to examine the time from its great not its second-rate. And if we consider the great figures themselves—Joyce, Yeats, Eliot, Valery, Proust, Gide, Rilke, Kafka, Mann—some very pertinent questions immediately oppose themselves to Shapiro's diatribe. Is it at all sure, in the first place, that these figures, or the age which produced them, need to be apologized for—by Mr. J. Donald Adams, Mr. Van Wyck Brooks, or Mr. Karl Shapiro? And if, examining these figures, we find that, though in different ways and on different levels, the difficulty is always there and persistent, can anyone avoid the simple induction that this difficulty has something to do with the time?

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Eliot has remarked that we cannot expect the writer at the moment of composition to repair the experience of a lifetime. Shapiro wants the writer not only to repair the effects of his own experience but of the whole of his culture. Yeats is criticized for using a constructed set of beliefs as against Dante's use of received beliefs; an advantage of Dante's culture, which Yeats could not have possibly called into existence for his time by the most strenuous exercise of his own private will. Unable to confront the work of art at any point with its society, Shapiro is obsessed by the timeless view of literature: he speaks of Shakespeare and the Elizabethans as surviving "the idiom of their time"—where one would have supposed they survived *through* that idiom. He exhorts against "the nervousness of genius in our era" —as if genius could escape being nervous in the era of the dissolution of Europe, the worldwide triumph of Stalin, and the permanent world war. The artist is lectured against his "self-imposed exile"—as if the artist chose it himself and were very happy about it.

The poet's beliefs happen also to be in his time. The leap of faith may be possible at any time, but it is more difficult and rare at one period than another. Why single out the literary man as the scapegoat, the guilty unbeliever in modern society? Has anyone shown that there is a greater percentage of religious unbelievers among literary men than among philosophers, scientists, and other intellectuals in our society? The "belief" Shapiro is trying to lobby vaguely past his readers seems to be Christian faith, though the information comes only in the backhanded way of a reproof (always the tone of elegiac querulousness!) of the modern writer's "purely literary use of Christ." Now Christ may be used in a variety of ways that are not literary, and we are still in the dark as to what particular Christian faith (if any) is being urged upon us for our salvation. From the particular unction of the references to Eliot as a religious figure we might guess it is some form of Catholicism. Eliot's example and prestige are used as a buttress for Shapiro's own belief (whatever it be). But the reader will sense a difference greater than any similarity: Eliot's faith was a positive commitment, Shapiro carries on a flirtation but leaves the back door unlatched. If Shapiro has some definite belief, he is unfair to his reader in not revealing it; if he is without a definite belief, the reader has been doubly put upon, since Shapiro has written a criticism of the modern intellectual from the point of view of someone with a definite belief. We would like to believe, if we could, that Shapiro is not simply following a bandwagon, since of all possible bandwagons the religious strikes us as the most shameful.

At times this invocation of Eliot's example becomes excessive and embarrassing, as when Shapiro at-

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tacks the writers who went to Spain and "left a leader (Eliot) home"—which can only mean that they should have stayed home and become Anglo-Catholics like Eliot. The Spanish Civil War was a tragedy of confused and divided loyalties, mixed motives and futile heroism, but the horrible ineptness of Shapiro's statement may be seen if we turn it back upon him and ask whether he was not leaving any leader at home when he went off to war in the South Pacific.

Literature involves more than the individual writer's going off by himself to write; as an activity within and against society, it involves the perpetual struggle to keep standards alive, an audience from disintegrating, a certain kind of consciousness alive in a society inert or hostile to it. Shapiro's failure, in the last analysis, is that he does not see this social dimension of literature, or wants to escape it. A failure he shares with the tweedy professors of English, the Book of the Month Club businessmen, the nostalgic fantasists of Americana— all his fellow crusaders in the anti-modernist witchhunt. Hence his particular disdain for the critic (whose reason for existence is this struggle) as a purely gratuitous being. There may be too many critics now writing, as Shapiro repeatedly protests, but there are never enough to complete criticism's tasks—one of which is to remind the poet from time to time that poetic license does not extend to the world of ideas, that when the poet touches ideas, not everything goes.

Shapiro's whole poem breathes a pious aspiration towards a simpler state of literary being. When he urges poets to "the piety / Of simple craftsmen for their wood," he reveals his own wish that literature were as simple an occupation as woodturning or carpentry. If only one would chuck it all, go off by oneself to write poetry untroubled by the confusions of modern life! We may be touched by this aspiration towards simplicity, but we must point out the irresponsibility of turning one's back upon the difficulties of being a literary man in the modern world. The supreme irony is that the critical fraternity in which Shapiro may now have his pin as a full-fledged initiate should have applied the word "irresponsible" to the writers who have tried to face these difficulties.

WILLIAM BARRETT

Excellency

MY OLD friend Tiburzio Panzironi, the small Roman bureaucrat, refused to make a brilliant career, and yet he constantly complained about his status. So one day I said to him: "Why don't you try to free yourself from your present condition instead of complaining? Climb to a better post and you will find it easier to endure this kind of life." "What?" he replied, "free myself by climbing a ladder that is all made up of

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these things? By stepping on the paper that is piled up in front of me so that it will become the paper that is piled up under my feet?" "Sure," I said. "If you climb high enough you will be able to transform it." "Transform it?" he said. "Never heard of such a thing as a revolution from above, unless you mean by it the public suicide of all high-ranking bureaucrats, diplomats and statesmen. Do you really believe that, after you have gotten used to this kind of existence, to this stench and this lingo, and especially to this character-wrecking servility, you will be able to transform what has already transformed *you?* Have you ever heard of such a thing as a man being devoured by his own excrement?"

He agreed with Mussolini, and more so, with Hitler, on one point. "We need a new mythology," he said. "I have it. Take the State for instance. The State should be represented as a beast in the position of a dog at play, with the head low, touching the floor, between the front-paws, and the rest of the body high on the hind legs. The growing generations come to him, like insects on the floor, and ask to be devoured. He takes them in with his large tongue, then chews them thin, and gulps them, yes, and here's where my mythology comes in: he gulps them UP, not DOWN. And up they go, higher and higher in the body politic or bureaucratic, each single bureaucrat eager to be digested quicker than the next one, anxious to slip through as smoothly as possible, until they all eventually "emerge," and I shall not describe the rest. You know what they are called when they get there: *Your Excellency.* You, my friends, are all welcome to make a quick and brilliant career. I prefer to remain in the dark, undigested."

NICCOLO TUCCI

Stalin the Infallible

THE WAR was no sooner over than the flow of dithyrambs in honor of the great Stalin began once more, and the wreaths of incense again mounted to heaven. Hundreds of newspaper articles and thousands of orators in Russia point out that Stalin foresaw and forecast everything, and that is why the war ended victoriously. The war was "a great verification" of the *kolkhozi,* of industrialization, of Russia's foreign policy, of Communism in power. Stalinism passed the test, because at the helm of the state there stands a pilot who never errs.

This praise beyond measure is now quite opportune—I do not speak in jest. It is indispensable, because the course and outcome of the war may lead many to scrutinize the basic principles of Stalinist policy—to scrutinize critically and to question its infallibility. It should not be supposed that behind the gray screen of dull and trivial newspaper articles there are no inquisitive minds striving toward

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the truth; that people cease thinking in a country that has been at war; that intellectual life has stopped in recent years. On the contrary, a great crisis like a war steps up interest in political problems and calls for a "great verification" of the theories inculcated in the prewar period.

Among the dozens of Stalin's forecasts that did not come true there are two that are of the greatest importance. Every intelligent man in Russia knows them; every former pupil, every student, every member of a party circle recalls these forecasts, because all of them studied Stalin's speeches and writings. The two errors are closely interrelated.

When the war loomed on the horizon, and the problem of the defense of Russia became urgent—this was in 1934—Stalin confirmed and repeated old Communist theory by declaring that "the war will beyond doubt unleash the revolution and put in question the very existence of capitalism in a number of countries." According to Stalin, the revolution would take place among the enemies of the Soviet Union, and would be one of the most important factors in her defense. "The war against the Soviet Union," he declared, "will be most dangerous for the bourgeoisie, because it will be waged not only at the fronts, but also behind the enemy's lines. . . . The numerous friends of the Soviet working class will strike at the rear of the oppressors who plan a criminal war against the fatherland of the working classes of all countries." This was the old pattern, carried over from the First World War, which seems to have been confirmed in the course of the intervention of 1918 and 1919. It became one of the Communist canons; it was a corner-stone of the Communist philosophy that international solidarity was to be counted on in the crisis of war.

These predictions of Stalin were in no way confirmed by events.

Directly connected with these "Marxist prophecies" are Stalin's prognostications of 1941 and 1942, after the beginning of hostilities. In November 1941 he said that "the rear of the German Wehrmacht is a volcano ready to blow up and bury the Hitlerite adventurers." "In the German people," he said, "there developed a critical revulsion against the continuation of the war, a desire for the liquidation of the war. More than two years of bloody war . . . could not fail to turn the German people against the unnecessary and ruinous struggle."

Lozovsky, implementing Stalin's ideas through the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, hastened to write that unknown persons had placarded houses in Berlin with the slogan: *"Heil Moskau!"* And, obviously counting on an explosion of the German volcano, Stalin, in his order to the Red Army of May 1, 1942, said: "I order the whole Red Army to see to it that 1942 should become the year of the final rout of the German-fascist troops and the year of liberation

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Sören Kierkegaard

There is a renaissance of interest today in the works of this great Danish theologian who, a hundred years ago, laid the foundation of his philosophy in existential thinking. Princeton University Press is the publisher of English translations of thirteen of his works:

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of the Soviet land from the Hitlerite scoundrels."

Everyone in Russia knows that these hopes and predictions were never realized. The Soviet Union did receive considerable help from abroad; however, it came not from revolutionary elements in Germany, but from the "capitalist and imperialist" governments of England and the United States. Not the solidarity of interests of the world proletariat but the solidarity of the interests of the "world bourgeoisie" with those of the Soviet Union sealed the fate of Germany. The Red Army was not victorious in 1942 because no one came to its help from inside Germany; it had to wait for the Allied landing in Normandy.

At the fateful historical moment, when the need for international solidarity in its Communist meaning was more pressing than at any time in the preceding twenty years, it failed to manifest itself. This fact has initiated a profound intellectual crisis. The mainstays of traditional Communism have been shaken. The theories have gone to the wind. Hundreds of books have been transformed into piles of scrap paper.

Everyone waits for a new word. It does not come. Formerly Stalin's theses, platforms, and theories poured forth in an abundant stream and were translated into a hundred languages. Now Stalin is silent in all the hundred languages, and the people read only his banquet toasts. But Stalin cannot possibly draw all the required inferences from the facts. This would lead to an ideological catastrophe. Instead, he proposes to plant a new social system in other countries by means of his bayonets. But this is a poor *ersatz* for the old theory of solidarity.

If freedom of the press existed in present-day Russia, even in a minute form, we should be witnessing a great intellectual crisis. But the crisis is developing even without a free press, and the inferences from historical events made by thinking people lead in various directions. Some advocate a return to the old, traditional, prerevolutionary nationalism. Stalin's "socialism in one country" always contained an element of nationalism, but it was consistent, in his eyes, with internationalism; now many rule out the latter. Germany is a Sodom in which not even five just men have been found; the Germans are criminals and idiots; their country must be destroyed. The Soviet Union is Russia, the land of heroes and giants. Her rights abroad are proportional to her sacrifices. The progress of mankind is measured by the successes of Russia. Among the peoples of the Union not all are of equal value; for instance, the Ukrainians and White Russians proved unequal to the ordeal. But the Russian, that is to say, the Great Russian, is the demiurge of history, because he has saved Russia and world civilization. Such are the chief ideological elements of the new Communist nationalism. It is

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Communist, because it does not subject to criticism the Stalinist social and class system. But its acceptance of this system is matter-of-fact, without pathos or enthusiasm.

Such a mood is apparently widespread in military circles, that is, among officers, but it goes beyond these circles. Ehrenburg's popularity was particularly great in the army and navy press, but it went further. His primitive anti-Germanism, which was at first an elementary emotion, later, as his success grew, developed almost into a complete system. At the time when he was officially reprimanded, the war was about to end; then he applied his line to other problems, insistently and just as primitively arguing that Germany had in actual fact been defeated not by the Allies acting together, but by the Soviet Union alone. It is easy to see the extent to which this view affects the problems of the postwar organization of Europe. But Ehrenburg never spoke of Communism, capitalism, or the social systems of any countries, even that of Russia. In his eyes, as in the eyes of thousands of his devotees, these are secondary considerations.

The magazine *Bolshevik* reports that the editors of the *Historical Review* were offered an article that declared class struggle as an historical method to be an "infantile disease of the Left." The author believes that the revolutionary uprisings of Pugachev, Razin, and Bolotnikov, and even the Decembrist movement, should be considered reactionary, for they weakened the state—"undermined the strength of the autocratic rule in Russia." "If Pugachev had been victorious," he contends, "Russia's political power would have been exposed to reverses, she might have lost her place among the world powers." And recently the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party adopted a resolution concerning the teaching of Marxism-Leninism at the University of Saratov. The resolution states that "in lectures and seminar work, the radical antagonism between bourgeois and proletarian philosophies is insufficiently explained, and the superiority of the Soviet socialist regime over the capitalist regime is only weakly stressed."

At the Institute of Economics, a certain Sazonov submitted a doctor's thesis which *Bolshevik* characterized as "not seeing the difference between socialist and capitalist enterprises." According to this thesis, the operation of the law of value in the USSR does not differ in any respect from its operation under capitalist conditions, etc.

In such criticisms of orthodox Stalinism, there is doubtless much that is correct. But the only political deviation that is tolerated is in the new nationalism; hundreds of Ehrenburgs and Sazonovs express a new trend, in which the restoration of pre-revolutionary ideological elements is combined with Stalinist socialism. But the Stalinist social system is the old, accustomed idea, and it is not mentioned,

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while the concept of Soviet empire is a new, militant, stimulating watchword.

This deviation is opposed by the whole party machine. It goes without saying that the Soviet government tolerates and exploits the new trends for its own purposes, and during the war it drew considerable benefit from the most primitive nationalist propaganda. But the party apparatus and its leadership sense the growing danger of such moods; they do not and cannot go so far in their ideology as the nationalists. In the party the critique of capitalism still holds its place, and its leaders cannot afford to classify earlier revolutionary movements in Russian history as reactionary; the whole party might become useless, and might be displaced by a different type of autocracy. This is why semi-official party organs attack individual spokesmen of the new nationalism. Several months ago Ehrenburg was subjected to a public reprimand; now G. Alexandrov in *Bolshevik* again censures various deviations and calls for the original purity of Leninism-Stalinism. The party's central committee levels one resolution after another at publications and universities that are becoming strongholds of the new deviations. But the deviations multiply and gain strength, because the living spirit has departed from the old dogmas. And the leader fails to supply a new theory.

Stalin is cautious. He seems to be above both trends, although he naturally personifies both the party

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and the police-machine. He welcomes nationalism as much as he can. He has revised his position with regard to Germany and has replaced humanitarian phrases with teeth-smashing acts. He has replaced his former theory of complete equality among the nationalities living in the Union with the exaltation of the Russian nation. He speaks of his forty-year old grief over Russia's loss of southern Sakhalin in 1905. He recovers Port Arthur and stretches out his hand toward African colonies. At the same time, however, he does his utmost to strengthen the party, as though in defiance of the dangerous and suspect military machine, for the latter may be sheltering the newly threatening political ideas. Lavrentyi Beria, civilian chief of the NKVD, was made a marshal in order to balance, at least in part, the promotion of a whole pleiad of military leaders. The most important among them, particularly Zhukov and even Voroshilov, member of the Politburo, occupy posts in Germany and Hungary, and in Moscow it is generally believed that they are deliberately being kept far from the Kremlin. Meanwhile the Central Committee is organizing a campaign against the new deviations.

Ostensibly the war ended with a tremendous strengthening of the Soviet government both at home and abroad. But it also ended in great ideological confusion. The strengthening of the government is paralleled by intellectual disorien-

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November

THE ILIAD, or The Poem of Force. By Simone Weil. Translated by Mary McCarthy.

Also: Niccolo Tucci's "The Friend of the Jews," Ed Seldon's "The Resistance Poetry of Aragon and Eluard."

December

NEW ROADS IN POLITICS—beginning a series of articles criticizing the basis of present leftwing thinking, and suggesting ideas and tactics for the future. Opening articles by Paul Goodman and Will Herberg. To be followed by articles by Don Calhoun, Nicola Chiaromonte, Helen Constas, Dwight Macdonald, James Peck, Albert Votaw, and others.

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tation. The crisis cannot be held in check by police measures, since it is an intellectual crisis. The war knocked out certain mainstays from under the old theories. Stalinist Communism — the Communism that we observed through a decade and a half before the war—will not long survive the military victory. The succession is claimed by a tendency implying reconciliation with old Russia and leading toward the creation of a new-old Russia of generals' uniforms and peasants' linden bark shoes, a Russia strong and poor, with a leader ruling, in the words of the Tsarist anthem, "to bring glory to us, and fear to our enemies," with battleships and political prisons, splendor and epidemics, champagne and perennial famine. This trend probably has more strength than can be gauged from its individual, and legally permitted manifestations. Emigré ex-generals and admirals, old interventionists, metropolitans, deputies of the extreme Right, strive to join it—and they are joyously invited to return home.

Expressions of other tendencies in Russia are not heard, but this is not because Russia lacks citizens who want political freedom and peaceful collaboration with the outside world. On the contrary, there are many such people and their numbers will grow in the course of the ideological crisis. But there is no political aspiration more persecuted in Russia than the aspiration toward freedom of thought. Among the numerous Stalinist zigzags and maneuvers through the last two decades, now to the right, now to the left, there was never a zig-zag in the direction of political freedom. Compromises were possible with capitalism, fascism, Hitlerism, imperialism—but not with democracy.

There is, for instance, the great success of Kron's play *Navy Officer,* recently staged simultaneously in several Moscow theatres. The most significant feature of this play is the defense of human dignity by the chief protagonist, Gorbunov, in the face of his military superiors. "Comrade Rear-Admiral," says Gorbunov, "you enjoy tremendous rights in relation to me. You can have me arrested, tried, and reduced to the ranks. But no one has given you the right to speak to me in a disrespectful tone!" He even challenges the system of espionage and denunciations. Gorbunov regards as indecent the conduct of a young officer who, hearing "harmful things" from a comrade, informs his superior instead of first speaking directly to his comrade. Gorbunov is depicted as a man who hates servility.

The great success of this essentially rather naive play is one of many symptoms. In all of this there is no indication of struggle for freedom of speech, nor of any kind of political program. But programs come later; the espousal of human dignity against slavish submission, the challenge thrown in the face of arbitrary authority—these alone constitute a program.

DAVID J. DALLIN

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A French Number

In the next issue of PARTISAN REVIEW we shall present an anthology of significant French writing, selected in the light of two distinct but obviously related aims. We are concerned, first, to bring to the attention of American readers the French writers who have asserted themselves since communications with Paris were interrupted in 1940, i.e., writers who are little known in this country.

Within this group, PARTISAN REVIEW will seek out those authors, particularly, who affirm through the excellence and originality of their work, as through the pertinence of their ideas, the survival of the vigorous, various, and essentially modern French spirit. This spirit has nothing in common with the reactionary patriotism which Louis Aragon turns on and off like a radiator, according to the temperature of the Soviet Foreign Commissariat. Nor should it be confused with the "logic" and "universality" which are the chief wares of the touching old ladies of the *Alliance Francaise*. We make no secret of our attachment to a spirit *in* France, a spirit at once partisan and skeptical, passionate and disabused. This is a strain which we recognize immediately in writers like Queneau, Sartre, Camus, Julien Gracq. It is at once irritating and exalting, political and literary. Pitched in our era of wars and revolutions, its measure and end is the human condition.

In addition to selections from the above-named authors, our special French number will include prose and poetry by Simone de Beauvoir, Claude-Edmonde Magny, Georges Bataille, René Char, Guillevic, Jean Genet, Blanchot, Francis Ponge, André Frenaud and others.

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This Is Yeats Speaking

THIS IS William Butler Yeats. I want to speak to my friends in America about a thing which troubles me even now, though I have recovered leisure, and know more than I did about structure, mathematical and otherwise.

It is my friend Ezra Pound—who has made so many beautiful things. You Americans, you have him now on trial. I remember I warned him once about politics, not as you think, that we poets should stay out of it, I said simply, do not be elected to the Senate of your country. I was thinking of my own experience. I merely observed, you and I are much out of place as would be the first composers of Sea-shanties in an age of Steam.

I am not very interested in your hysteria, or his. We of Ireland have lived with treason long. It is not as dramatic as Ezra thinks, he has always been in these things as in so much American, exterior, moral. When he shouted, and now I hear you shout, I stoop down and write with my finger on the ground.

I do not know that any of us of my generation, and few of yours —I too a revolutionist—understand the contraries which are now engaged. William Blake observed that oppositions do not make true contraries.

It was our glory, Pound's and mine, I except Eliot—tradition is too organized with him, his uncertainty before chaos leads him to confuse authority with orthodoxy—to reassert the claims of authority in a world of whiggery. It is true what Pound said, we men of the mind do stand with the lovers of order. We value it, with what labor we purchase it in our work. We opposed ourselves to a leveling, rancorous, rational time.

What a man of Eliot's words would call our sin was the opposite of his. Willing as we were to oppose and go forward, we did not seek true contrary. Because of your irascible mind, Pound, and because my bones always took to comfort like a retainer's, you were ever in haste, and I sometimes, to think these men who marched and preached a new order—we of our excitable profession are attracted to sick men and buccaneers—had taken that other chaos of men's lives up in their hands, had worked to master it as we do ours, and could shape what men now need, rest, an end to this sea of question.

I understand this, at the distance I have acquired, I have Troilus' vantage, from the seventh sphere to look back on Diomed and Cressid both.

It was Pound's error to think, because he was able to examine with courage and criticize eloquently the world we have inherited—Rapallo was a place to escape the knots of passion, it was the village in the Chinese poem to which the official retired, inhabited by old men devoted to the classics —Pound thought this power, necessary to us men who had to make the language new, also gave him

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the sight to know the cure. It is the frenzy that follows when the mask of man is askew. The being must brag of its triumph over its own incoherence.

I examine his work in this new light and when he lay with beauty in her corner or fed cats in the street, they have their oppressors, he was a true lover of order. I would undo no single word of all he has published, quarrel as I have with him, take as I did at times his work of twenty years, the Cantos, to be a botch of tone and colour, all Hodos Chameliontos.

He was false—out of phase—when he subordinated his critical intelligence to the objects of authority in others. If the Positive Man do that, all the cruelty and narrowness of his intellect are displayed in service of preposterous purpose after purpose till there is nothing left but the fixed idea and some hysterical hatred.

It was natural he looked for an elite, and from brawlers and poets. It was his obsession to draw all things up into the pattern of art. He was ignorant of science and he will be surprised, as Goethe will not be, to find a physicist come on as Stage Manager of the tragedy.

It is a time, yours, when forces large as centuries battle and I suppose you must be more violent in your judgment than a man like me who had age tied to his tail like a can. But this I would say to you: you must take strength by embracing the criticism of your enemy.

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It is the beauty of demons they rush in to struggle with a cry of hate you must hear if you will answer them.

I have advanced far enough out of the prison of my generation to understand it is civil war in which you are locked.

What day you ask when date
is dead
of May, when month is lost.
I can be precise though it is
no answer:
this is the day of great year
the day of fear.
Man is moon.

You will know better than I how it is to be fought. I wrote to my wife one time from Rapallo when I had listened to Pound for an afternoon damn usury, expound credit and Major Douglas, talk the totalitarian way, it was as though I were in the presence of one of Wyndham Lewis' revolutionary simpletons.

I had never read Hegel, but my mind had been full of Blake from boyhood up, I saw the world as a conflict, and could distinguish between a contrary and a negation. Yet it was not easy for me to listen when one of your young men who had come to Rapallo to see Pound came away and said to me: "He has mingled with ferret and chameleon, vulture and kite, every antisemite after his kind. He has touched abomination and is unclean."

In my first hard spring-time I had a friend I thought half a lunatic, half knave.

And I told him so, but friendship never ends;
And what if mind seem
changed,
And it seemed changed with
the mind,
When thought rise up unbid
On generous things that he
did
And I grow half contented to
be blind!

Now in your country I hear a department called Justice speak of scripts for wireless and Ezra, as I would expect, talk back sharp. (Words cause no man fear except in the making of them.) I pay little heed, though there is pity in me, for I know Pound, he is a gambler and can measure consequence.

The soul is stunned in me, O writers, readers, fighters, fearers, for another reason, that you have allowed this to happen without a trial of your own. It is the passivity of you young men before Pound's work as a whole, not scripts alone, you who have taken from him, Joyce, Eliot and myself the advances we made for you. There is a court you leave silent—history present, the issue the larger concerns of authority than a state, Heraclitus and Marx called, perhaps some consideration of descents and metamorphoses, form and the elimination of intellect.

We were the forerunners—Pound only the more extreme—but our time was out of phase and made us enders. Lawrence among us

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alone had the true mask, he lacked the critical intelligence, and was prospective. You are the antithetical men, and your time is forward, the conflict is more declared, it is you to hold the mirror up to authority, behind our respect for which lay a disrespect for democracy as we were acquainted with it. A slogan will not suffice.

It is a simple thing I ask as I might question a beggar who stopped me for a coin. It is the use, the use you make of us.

Are you a court to accept and/or reject JEFFERSON AND/OR MUSSOLINI, indict GUIDE TO CULTURE and write a better, brief me contrary ABCs, charge why 100 CANTOS betrays your country, that poem which concerns itself so much with the men who made your Revolution for you? I have said I often found there brightly printed kings, queens, knaves but have never discovered why all the suits could not be dealt out in some quite different order. What do you find, a traitor?

Dean Swift says in a meditation on a woman who paints a dying face,

Matter as wise logicians say
Cannot without a form subsist;
And form, say I as well as they,
Must fail, if matter brings no grist.

What have you to help you hold in a single thought reality and justice?

CHARLES OLSON

Packages for Europe

We have received letters from Dwight Macdonald, editor of *Politics* at 45 Astor Place, New York City, and Phil Heller, Executive Director of the International Solidarity Committee, Room 516, 303 Fourth Avenue, New York City. Both letters ask us to advise our readers of the need of sending packages of food and clothing to anti-fascists in Europe, to leftists who because of their political connections have even more difficulty than most Europeans in securing the necessities of life. It should be needless to say that we urge our readers to give all the help they can and to communicate with Dwight Macdonald or Phil Heller at the above addresses.

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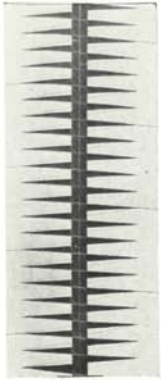
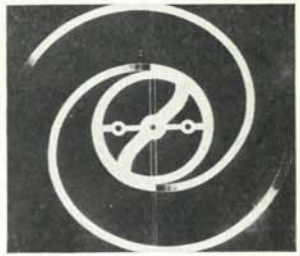
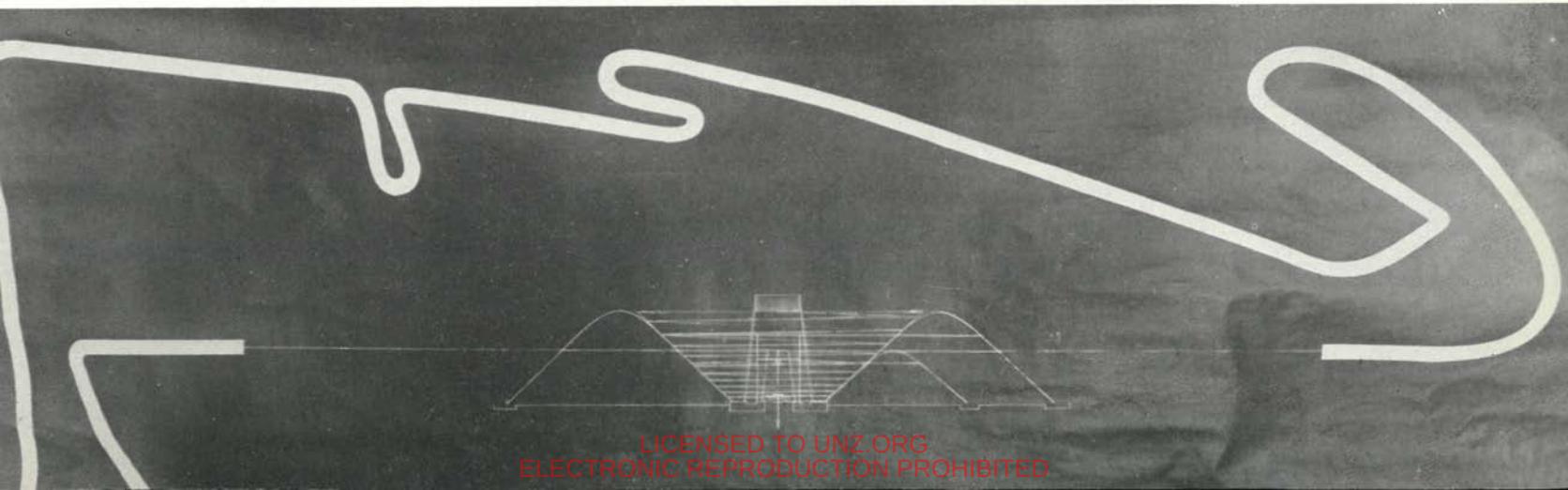




Left: SPIRAL STORE, Paris, 1925; *above*: SPACE STAGE OF SPACE THEATER, Vienna 1923-24; *right*: SPIRAL-JUNCTION, DETAIL OF ENDLESS; *below*: UNIVERSAL, Paris, 1925, *by Kiesler*.



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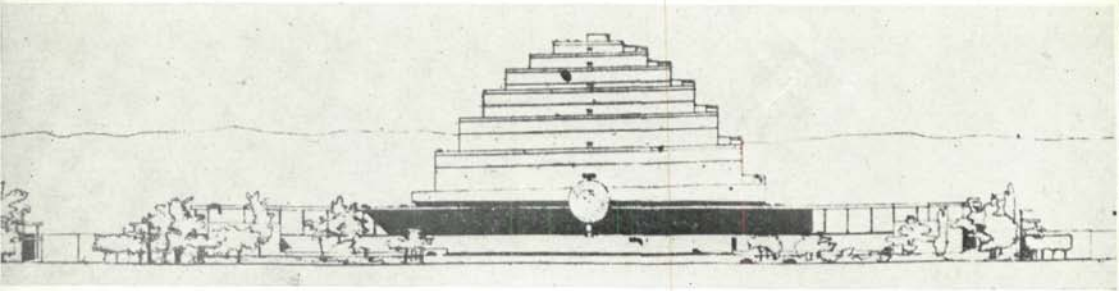
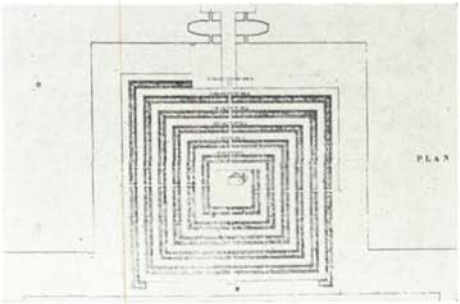
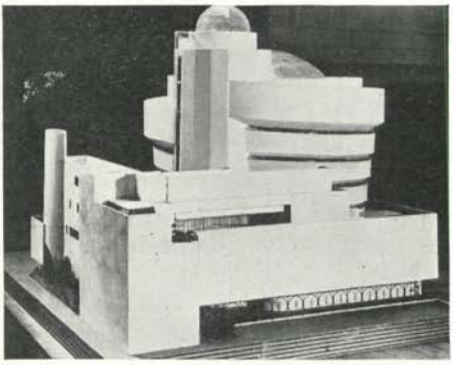
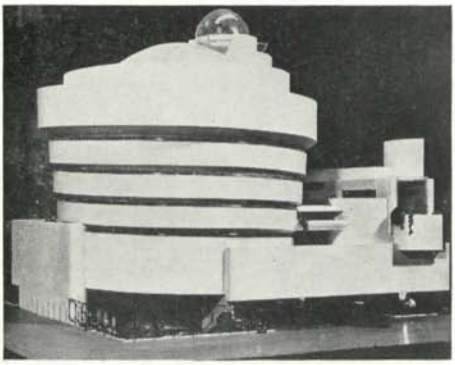


MUSEE MONDIAL, Paris, 1929 *by Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret,* (plan).——→







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Of Partisan Review published quarterly at New York, N. Y. for October 1, 1945.

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Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Judith Fengel, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that she is the Business Manager of the Partisan Review and that the following is, to the best of her knowledge and belief,a true statement of the ownership, management ,etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the Act of March 3, 1933, embodied in section 537, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

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